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# UNFINISHED PORTRAITS

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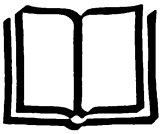

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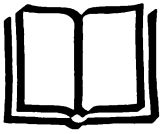

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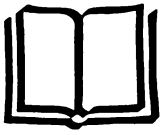

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THE WOMAN IN THE ALCOVE
AUNT JANE
THE IBSEN SECRET
THE SYMPHONY PLAY

*The great picture gathered to itself shape, and glowed.*
[Page 253

# UNFINISHED PORTRAITS

## STORIES OF MUSICIANS AND ARTISTS

BY JENNETTE LEE

*Schubert*
*Chopin*
*Bach*
*Titian*
*Giorgione*
*Leonardo*
*Albrecht Dürer*

*NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS*

1916

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# THERE WAS IN FLORENCE A LADY

# There Was in Florence a Lady

## I

THE soft wind of an Italian spring stirred among the leaves outside. The windows of the studio, left open to the morning air, were carefully shaded. The scent of mulberry blossoms drifted in. The chair on the model-stand, adjusted to catch the light, was screened from the glare; and the light falling on the rich drapery flung across its back brought out a dull carmine in the slender, bell-shaped flowers near by, and dark gleams of old oak in the carved chair. The chair was empty; but the two men in the studio were facing it, as if a presence were still there.

The painter, sketching idly on the

edge of his drawing-board, leaned back to survey the child's head that developed under his pencil. "She will not come this morning, then?" he asked almost indifferently.

The older man shook his head. "She said not. She may change her mind."

The painter glanced up quickly. He could see nothing in the face of the other, and he devoted himself anew to the child's head. "It does not matter," he said. "I can work on the background—if I feel like working at all," he added, after a moment's pause.

The older man stared moodily at the floor. He flicked a pair of long riding-gloves lightly through his fingers. He glanced toward the easel standing in front of the painter, a little to the left. "It is barbarous that you have had to waste so much time!" he broke out. "How long

is it? Two—no, three years last Christmas time since you began. And there it stands." The figure on the easel, erect, tranquil, in the old chair, seemed to half shrug its shapely shoulders in defense of the unfinished face. He looked at it severely. The severity changed to something else. "And it is so perfect—damnably perfect," he said irritably.

The artist raised his eyebrows the least trifle. A movement so slight might have indicated scrutiny of his own work. "You are off for the day?" he asked, glancing at the riding-whip and hat on a table by the door.

"Yes; I shall run up, perhaps, as far as Pistoia. Going to see the new altarpiece." He took up the hat and whip. He waited, fingering them indecisively. "She seems to me more fickle than ever, this last month or two."

"I see that she is restless." The painter spoke in a low tone, half hesitating. "I have wondered whether—I had hoped that the Bambino"—he touched the figure lightly with his foot—"might not be needed."

The other started. He stared at him a full minute. His eyes fell. "No, no such good luck," he said brusquely. "It is only caprice."

The draperies near him parted. A boyish figure appeared in the opening. "Castino wishes me to say that the musicians wait," said the youth.

The painter rose and came toward him, a smile of pleasure on his face. "Tell them that there will be no sitting to-day, Salai," he said, laying his hand, half in greeting, half in caress, on the youth's shoulder.

"Yes, Signor." Salai saluted and withdrew.

The painter turned again to the older man. "It was a happy thought of yours, Zano—the music. She delights in it. I almost caught, one day last week, while they were playing, that curve about the lips."

They stood for a moment in silence, looking toward the portrait. The memory of a haunting smile seemed to flicker across the shaded light.

"Well, I am off." The man held out his hand.

The artist hesitated a second. Then he raised the hand in his supple fingers and placed it to his lips. "A safe journey to you, Signor," he said, in playful formality.

"And a safe return, to find our Lady Lisa in better temper," laughed the other. The laugh passed behind the draperies.

The artist remained standing, his eyes resting absently on the rich colors of the Venetian tapestry through which his friend had disappeared. His face was clouded with thought. He had the look of a man absorbed in a problem, who has come upon an unexpected complication.

When the chess-board is a Florentine palace, and the pieces are fifteenth-century human beings, such complications are likely to occur. The Lady Lisa had more than once given evidence that she was not carved of wood or ivory. But for three years the situation had remained the same—the husband unobservant, the lady capricious and wilful. She had shown the artist more kindness than he cared to recall. That was months ago. Of late he had found scant favor in her sight. . . . It was better so.

He crossed to the easel, and stood

looking down at it. The quiet figure on the canvas sent back a thrill of pride and dissatisfaction. He gazed at it bitterly. Three years—but an eternal woman. Some day he should catch the secret of her smile and fix it there. The world would not forget her—or him. He should not go down to posterity as the builder of a canal! The great picture at the Dominicans already showed signs of fading. The equestrian statue of the Duke was crumbling in its clay—no one to pay for the casting. But this picture—— For months—with its rippling light of under sea, its soft dreamy background, and in the foreground the mysterious figure. . . . All was finished but the Child upon her arm, the smile of light in her eyes.

The lady had flouted the idea. It was a fancy of her husband's, to paint her as Madonna. She had refused to touch

the Bambino — sometimes petulantly, sometimes in silent scorn. The tiny figure lay always on the studio floor, dusty and disarranged. The artist picked it up. It was an absurd little wooden face in the lace cap. He straightened the velvet mantle and smoothed the crumpled dress. He stepped to the model-stand and placed the tiny figure in the draped chair. It rested stiffly against the arm.

A light laugh caused him to turn his head. He was kneeling in front of the Bambino.

"I see that you have supplied my place, Sir Painter," said a mocking voice.

He turned quickly and faced the little doorway. She stood there, smiling, scornful, her hands full of some delicate flimsy stuff, a gold thimble-cap on her finger. "It would not make a bad picture," she said tranquilly, "you and the Bambino."

His face lighted up. "You have come!" He hastened toward her with outstretched hand.

With a pretty gesture of the fragile sewing she ignored the hand. "Yes, I dared not trust you. You might paint in the Bambino face instead of mine, by mistake."

She approached the chair and seated herself carelessly. The Bambino slipped meekly through the arm to the floor.

"Zano told me"—he began.

"Yes, I know. He was very tiresome. I thought he would never go. I really feared that we might quarrel. It is too warm." She glanced about the shaded room. "You manage it well," she said approvingly. "It is by far the coolest place in the palace."

"You will be going to the mountains soon?" He saw that she was talking

lightly to cover herself, and fell in with her mood. He watched her as he arranged the easel and prepared his colors. Once he stopped and sketched rapidly for a minute on the small drawing-board.

She looked inquiry.

"Only an eyebrow," he explained.

She smiled serenely. "You should make a collection of those eyebrows. They must mount into the hundreds by this time. You could label them 'Characters of the Lady Lisa.'"

"The Souls of Lady Lisa."

The lady turned her head aside. "Your distinctions are too subtle," she said. Her eye fell on the Bambino, resting disgracefully on its wooden head. "Poor little figurine," she murmured, reaching a slender hand to draw it up. She straightened the tumbled finery absently. It slipped to her lap, and lay there. Her

hands were idle, her eyes looking far into space.

The painter worked rapidly. She stirred slightly. "Sit still," he said, almost harshly.

She gave a quick, startled look. She glanced at the rigid little figure. She raised it for a minute. Her face grew inscrutable. Would she laugh or cry? He worked with hasty, snatched glances. Such a moment would not come again. A flitting crash startled him from the canvas. He looked up. The Bambino lay in a pathetic heap on the floor, scattered with fragments of a rare Venetian glass. She sat erect and imperious, looking with scorn at the wreck. Two great tears welled. They overflowed. The floods pressed behind them. She dropped her face in her hands. Before he could reach her she had darted from the chair. The

mask of scorn was gone. She fled from him, from herself, blindly, stopping only when the wall of the studio intervened. She stood with her face buried in the drapery, her shoulders wrenched with sobs.

He approached her. He waited. The Bambino lay with its wooden face staring at the ceiling. It was a crisis for them all. The next move would determine everything. He must not risk too much, again. The picture—art—hung on her sobs. Lover—artist? He paused a second too long.

She turned toward him slowly, serenely. Her glance fell across him, level and tranquil. The traces of ignored tears lay in smiling drops on her face. The softened scorn played across it. "Shall we finish the sitting?" she asked, in a conventional voice.

He took up his brush uncertainly. She

seated herself, gathering up the scattered work. For a few moments she sewed rapidly. Then the soft fabric fell to her lap. She sat looking before her, unconscious, except that her glance seemed to rest now and then on the fallen figure in its fragments of glass.

For two hours he worked feverishly, painting with swiftest skill and power. At times he caught his breath at the revelation in the face. He was too alert to be human. The artist forgot the woman. Faithfully, line by line, he laid bare her heart. She sat unmoved. When at last, from sheer weariness, the brush dropped from his hand, she stepped from the model-stand, and stood at his side. She looked at the canvas attentively. The inscrutable look of the painted face seemed but a faint reflex of the living one.

"You have succeeded well," she said at last. "We will omit the Bambino."

She moved slowly, graciously, toward the door, gathering the fragile sewing as she went. He started toward her—suddenly conscious of her power—a man again. A parting of the draperies arrested them. It was Salai, his face agitated, looking from the lady to the painter, inarticulate.

"The Signor"—he gasped—"his horse—they bring him—dead."

She stirred slightly where she stood. Her eyelids fell. "Go, Salai. Await your master's commands in the hall below."

She turned to the painter as the draperies closed. "I trust that you will make all use of our service, Signor Leonardo, in removing from the palace. The apartments will, I fear, be needed for relatives. They will come to honor the dead."

He stood for a moment stupefied, aghast at her control of practical, feminine detail; then moved toward her. "Lisa——"

She motioned toward the easel. "Payment for the picture will be sent you soon."

"The picture goes with me. It is not finished."

"It is well." She bowed mockingly. The little door swung noiselessly behind her. He was left alone with the portrait. It was looking sideways at the fallen Bambino amid the shattered fragments on the floor.

## II

IT was the French monarch. He fluttered restlessly about the studio, urbane, enthusiastic. He paused to finger some ingenious toy, to praise some drawing or bit of sunlit color that caught his fancy. The painter, smiling at the frank enthusiasm, followed leisurely from room to room. The wandering Milanese villa was a treasure house. Bits of marble and clay, curious mechanical contrivances, winged creatures, bats and creeping things mingled with the canvases. Color and line ran riot on the walls. A few finished pieces had been placed on easels, in convenient light, for the royal inspection. Each of these, in turn, the volatile monarch had exalted. He had declared that everything in the villa, including the gifted owner, must return with him to France.

"That is the place for men like you!" he exclaimed, standing before a small, exquisitely finished Madonna. "What do these Milanese know of art? Or the Florentines, for that matter? Your 'Last Supper'—I saw it last week. It is a blur. Would that the sainted Louis might have taken it bodily, stone by stone, to our France, as he longed to do. You will see; the mere copy has more honor with us than the original here. Come with us," he added persuasively, laying his hand on the painter's shabby sleeve.

The painter looked down from his height on the royal suitor. "You do me too much honor, sire. I am an old man."

"You are Leonardo da Vinci," said the other stoutly, "the painter of these pictures. I shall carry them all away, and you will have to follow," laughed the monarch. "I will not leave one."

He rummaged gayly in the unfinished débris, bringing out with each turn some new theme of delight.

The painter stood by, waiting, alert, a trifle uneasy, it might seem. "And now, sire, shall we see the view from the little western turret?"

"One moment. Ah, what have we here?" He turned the canvas to the light. The figure against the quaint landscape looked out with level, smiling glance. He fell upon his knees before it. "Ah, marvellous, marvellous!" he murmured in naïve delight. He remained long before it, absorbed, forgetful. At last he rose. He lifted the picture and placed it on an easel. "Is she yet alive?" he demanded, turning to the painter.

"She lives in Florence, sire."

"And her name?"

"Signora Lisa della Gioconda."

"Her husband? It matters not."

"Dead these ten years."

"And children?"

"A boy. Born shortly after the husband's death," he added, after a slight pause. "Shall we proceed to the turret? The light changes fast at sunset."

"Presently, presently. The portrait must be mine. The original— We shall see—we shall see."

"Nay, your Majesty, the portrait is unfinished."

"Unfinished?" He stared at it anew. "Impossible. It is perfect."

"There was to be a child."

"Ah!" The monarch gazed at it intently for many minutes. The portrait returned the royal look in kind. He broke into a light laugh. "You did well to omit the child," he said. "Come, we will see the famous sunset now." He



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turned to the regal figure on the easel. "Adieu, Mona Lisa. I come for you again." He kissed his fingers with airy grace. He fluttered out. The mocking, sidelong glance followed him.

## III

THE western sun filled the room. On a couch drawn near the low French window lay the painter. His eyes looked across the valley to a long line of poplars, silver in the wind. Like a strange processional, up the hill, they held him. They came from Lombardy. In the brasier, across the room, burned a flickering fire. Even on the warmest days he shivered for sunnier skies. Above the fire hung a picture—a woman seated in a rock-bound circle, looking tranquilly out upon the world of life.

The painter touched a silver bell that stood on a table at hand. A figure entered. It crossed to the window. The face was turned in shadow. It waited.

"Has our good physician gone, Francesco?" asked the painter.

Francesco bowed. There was silence in the room except for the fire.

"What does he say of us to-day?"

The youth brushed his hand across his eyes impatiently. "He always croaks. He is never hopeful." He approached the couch and knelt by it, his face in the shadow still.

The painter lay tranquil, watching the poplars. "Why grieve? An exile has not so many joys that he need fear to lose them, Francesco."

The younger man made no reply. He was adjusting the pillows. He slipped a fresh one beneath the long white hair. The locks strayed in a dull silvery glimmer over it.

"Ah, that is good," murmured the old man. "Your hand is like a woman's. I have not known many women," he said, after a pause. . . . "But I have not been

lonely. Friends are faithful"—he pressed the youth's warm hand. "His Majesty?" —the voice ended with a question.

"No, master. But there is yet time. He often comes at sunset. See how bright it grows."

The painter turned his head. He looked long. "Tell us what the wise physician said, Francesco. Will it be soon?"

"Nay, master, I know not. He said if you have any wishes——"

"Ah, yes." He lay musing, his eyes looking across the room. "There will be few bequests. My pictures—they are mine no longer. Should a painter barter the sons and daughters of his soul? . . . Gold cannot buy. . . . They are mine. . . . Four thousand shining gold pieces Francis put into my hand. He took away the Lisa. He would not be refused. But I followed. I could not live without her.

When a man is old, Francesco, his hand trembles. He must see something he has done, something perfect. . . . " He lay looking long at the portrait. "And yet it is not finished. . . . There was to be the child." He smiled dreamily. "Poor Bambino." His eyes rested again on the portrait. . . . He smiled back upon it. "Yes, you will live," he said softly. "Francis will have you. You scorned him. But he was generous. He gave you back to me. You will be his—his and his children's. I have no child—— At least . . . Ah, well—Francis will have you. Leda and Pomona will pass. The Dominican picture . . . all but gone. The hand of time has rested on my work. Crumbling—fading—nothing finished. I planned so much. Life runs, Francesco, while one sits and thinks. Nothing finished. My manuscripts —do with them what you will. I could

not even write like other men—this poor left hand." He lifted the filmy lace ruffle falling across his hand. He smiled ironically at the costly folds, as they fluttered from his fingers. "A man is poor who has few wants. Then I have not been poor. But there is nothing left. It will be an empty name."

Silence fell between them.

"There is in Florence a lady. You must seek for her, Francesco. She is rich and beautiful. She did me once a kindness. I should like her—this ring—" He slipped it from his finger—a heavy stone, deep green, with translucent lights. "It was my father's crest. He gave it to my mother—not his wife—a woman—faithful. She put it on my finger when she died—a peasant woman. Tell the lady when you give it her . . . she has a son. . . . Tell her . . . " The voice fell hushed.

The young man waited, with bowed head. He looked up. He started quickly, and leaned his ear to listen. Then he folded the hands across the quiet breast. He passed swiftly from the silent chamber, down to the courtyard, out on the King's highway, mounted and fleet.

The French King was riding merrily. He carolled a gay chanson. His retinue followed at a distance. Francesco Melzi saluted and drew rein. He spoke a word in the monarch's ear. The two men stood with uncovered heads. They looked toward the western windows. The gay cavalcade halted in the glow of light. A hush fell on their chatter. The windows flamed in the crimson flood. Within the room, above the gleaming coals, a woman of eternal youth looked down with tranquil gaze upon an old man's face.

# THUMBS AND FUGUES

# Thumbs and Fugues

## I

"READY, father—ready!" shouted the small boy. He was standing on the top step of a flight of stairs leading to the organ-loft of the Hofchapel, peering in. His round, stolid face and short, square legs gave no hint of the excitement that piped in his shrill voice.

The man at the organ looked leisurely around, nodding his big head and smiling. "Ja, ja, S'bastian—ja," he said placidly. His fingers played slowly on.

The boy mounted the steps to the organ and rubbed his cheek softly against the coat sleeve that reached out to the keys. The man smiled again a big, floating smile, and his hands came to rest.

The boy looked up wistfully. "They'll all get there before we do," he said quickly. "Come!"

The man looked down absently and kindly. "Nein, S'bastian." He patted the round head beside him. "There is no need that we should hurry."

They passed out of the chapel, across the courtyard and into the open road. For half an hour they trudged on in silence, their broad backs swinging from side to side in the morning light. Across the man's back was slung a large violin, in its bag; and across the back of the boy hung a violin like that of the father, only shorter and fatter and squarer, and on his head was a huge woollen cap. He took it off and wiped the perspiration from his white forehead.

The man looked down at him once more and halted. "Now, but we will rest

here," he said gently. He removed the violin-bag carefully from his back and threw himself on the ground and took from his pocket a great pipe.

With a little sigh the boy sat down beside him.

The man nodded good-naturedly. "Ja, that is right." He blew a puff of smoke toward the morning clouds; "the Bachs do not hurry, my child—no more does the sun."

The boy smiled proudly. He looked up toward the ball of fire sailing above them and a change came over his face. "We might miss the choral," he said wistfully. "They won't wait, will they?"

The big man shook his head. "We shall not be late. There is my clock." He nodded toward the golden sun. "And I have yet another here," he added, placing a comfortable hand on his big stomach.

The boy laughed softly and lay quiet.

The man opened his lips and blew a wreath of smoke.

"There will be more than a hundred Bachs," he said slowly, "and you must play what I have taught you—not too slow and not too fast." He looked down at the boy's fat fingers. "Play like a true Bach and no other," he added.

The boy nodded. "Will Uncle Christoph be there?" he asked after a pause.

"Ja."

"And Uncle Heinrich?"

"Ja, ja!"

The boy gave a quick sigh of contentment.

His father was looking at him shrewdly. "But it is not Uncle Heinrich that will be making a player of you, and it is not Uncle Christoph. It is only Johann

Sebastian Bach that can make himself a player," he said sternly.

"Yes, father," replied the boy absently. His eyes were following the clouds.

The man blew great puffs of smoke toward them. "It is more than a hundred and twenty years ago that we came from Hungary," he said proudly.

The boy nestled toward him. "Tell me about it." He had heard the story many times.

"Ja, ja," said the man musingly. . . . "He was my great-grandfather, that man—Veit Bach—and your great-great-grandfather."

The boy nodded.

"And he was a miller——"

He dropped into silence, and a little brook that ran over the stones near by babbled as it went.

The boy raised his eyes. "And he had a lute," he prompted softly.

"Ja, he had a lute—and while the mill-wheel turned, he played the lute—sweet, true notes and tunes he played—in that old mill."

The boy smiled contentedly.

"And now we be a hundred Bachs. We make music for all Germany. Come!" He sprang to his feet. "We will go to the festival, the great Bach festival. You, my little son, shall play like a true Bach."

As they walked along the road he hummed contentedly to himself, speaking now and then a word to the boy. "What makes one Bach great, makes all. Remember, my child, Reinken is great—but he is only one; and Bohm and Buxtehude, Pachelbel. But we are many—all Bachs—all great." He hummed

gayly a few bars of the choral and stopped, listening.

The boy turned his face back over the road. "They are coming," he said softly.

"Ja, they are coming."

The next moment a heavy cart came in sight. It was laden to the brim with Bachs and music; some laughing and some singing and some playing—on fiddles or flutes or horns—beaming with broad faces.

The man caught up Sebastian by the arm and jumped on to the tail-board of the cart. And thus—enveloped in a cloud of dust, surrounded by the laughter of fun-loving men and youths—the boy came into Erfurt, to the great festival of all the Bachs.

## II

"SH–H! It is Heinrich! Listen to him —to Heinrich!" There were nods and smiles and soft thudding of mugs, and turning of broad faces toward the other end of the enclosure, as a small figure mounted the platform.

He was a tiny man, unlike the others; but he carried himself with a gentle pomposity, and he faced the gathering with a proud gesture, holding up his hand to enjoin silence. After a few muttering rumbles they subsided.

Sebastian, sitting between his father and a fat Bach, gulped with joy. It was the great Heinrich—who composed chorals and fugues and gavottes and—hush! Could it be that he was rebuking the Bachs—the great Bachs! . . . Sebastian's ears cracked with the strain. He looked

helplessly at his father, who sat smiling into his empty beer-mug, and at the fat Bach on the other side, who was gaping with open mouth at the great Heinrich.

Sebastian looked back to the platform.

Heinrich's finger was uplifted at them sternly. . . . "It was Reinken who said it. He of the Katherinenkirche has said it, in open festival, that there is not a Bach in Germany that can play as he can play. Do you hear that!" The little man stamped impatiently with his foot on the platform. "He has called us flutists and lutists and 'cellists—" He stopped and held up a small instrument that he carried in his hand—"Do you know what this is?"

A response of grunts and cheers came from the crowd.

Sebastian stretched his neck to see. It was a kind of viol, small and battered

and torn. Worn ribbons fluttered from the handle.

The small man on the platform lifted it reverently to his chin. He ran his fingers lightly along the broken strings. "You know the man who played it," he said significantly, "old Veit Bach—" Cheers broke from the crowd. He stopped them sternly. "Do you think if he were alive—if Veit Bach were alive, would Reinken, of Hamburg, dare challenge him in open festival?"

Cries of "Nein, nein!" and "Ja, ja!" came back from the benches.

"Ja, ja! Nein, nein!" snarled back the little man. "You know that he would not. He had only this—" He held up the lute again. "Only this and his mill. But he made the greatest music of his time. While you—thirty of you this day at the best organs in Germany. . . . And

Reinken defies you. . . . Reinken!" His lighted eye ran along the crowd. "Before the next festival, shall there be one who will meet him?" There was no response. The Bachs looked into their beer-mugs. The great Heinrich swept them with his eagle glance. "Is there not one," he went on slowly, "who dares promise, in the presence of the Bachs that before Reinken dies he will meet him and outplay him?"

The Bachs were silent. They knew Reinken.

Sebastian, wedged between his father and the fat Bach, gulped mightily. He struggled to get to his feet. But a hand at his coat-tails held him fast. He looked up imploringly into his father's face—but the hand at his coat-tails restrained him. "I will promise," he whispered, "I want to promise."

"Ja, ja, little son," whispered the father; and he and the fat Bach exchanged smiles across the round head.

Heinrich's glance swept the crowd once more. . . . "You will not promise? Then let me tell you—" He raised his small hand impressively.

"There shall come of the Bachs one so great that all others shall fade. He only shall be known as Bach—he and his sons; and before him the name of Reinken shall be as dust!" With a hiss upon the last word, he threw open his arms. "Come!" he said, "take your instrument and play."

Then fell upon the assembly a series of squeaks and gruntings and tunings and twinges and groans and wails such as was never heard outside a Bach festival. And little Sebastian, tugging at his violin, tuned and squeaked and

grunted with the rest, oblivious to the taps that fell on his small head from surrounding bows. And when at last the tuning was done and there burst forth the wonderful new melody of the choral, Sebastian's heart went dizzy with the joy of it. And Uncle Heinrich on the platform, strutting proudly back and forth, conducting the choral—his own choral—forgot his anger and forgot Reinken, and forgot everything except the Bachs playing there before him—playing as only the Bachs, the united Bachs, could play—in all Germany or in all the world.

# III

THE two boys had come to a turn in the road, and stood looking back over the way they had come. The younger of the two looked up wistfully to the cherry-blossomed trees overhead. "It is hot, Sebastian!—Let us rest."

With a smile the other boy threw himself on the grass. The large, flat book that he carried under his arm fell to the ground beside him, and his hand stole out and touched it. He had a wide, quiet face, with blue eyes and a short nose, and lips that smiled dreamily to themselves. As he lay looking up into the white blossoms that swayed and waited against the clear blue of the sky, the lips curved in gentle content.

His companion, who had thrown himself on the cool grass beside him, watched

him admiringly. His glance shifted and rested on the book that lay on the grass. "What is it?—What is it, Sebastian?" he asked timidly. He put out an inquisitive finger toward the book.

Sebastian turned it quietly aside. "Let be," he said.

The boy flushed. "I was not going to touch it."

The other smiled, with his slow, generous eyes fixed on the boy's face. "Thou art a good boy, Erdman!" . . . "It is only thy fingers that itch to know things." He patted them gently, where they lay on the grass beside him.

Erdman was still looking at the book. "Was it your brother's?" he asked in a half whisper.

"Christoph's?" Sebastian shook his head. "No, it is mine—my own."

The soft wind was among the blossoms

overhead—they fell in petals, one by one, upon the quiet figures.

"Want to know 'bout it?" asked Sebastian, half turning to meet his companion's eye.

The boy nodded.

"It's mine. I copied it, every note—six months it took me—from Christoph's book."

"Did he let you?"

Sebastian shook his head, a grim, sweet smile curving the big mouth. "Let me?—Christoph!"

The boy crept nearer to him. "How did you do it?"

"I stole it—carried it up to my room while the others were asleep—and did it by the moon."

"The moon?"

The boy nodded, laughing. "Didst never hear of the moon, brave boy!"

Erdman smiled pettishly. "There isn't a moon—always," he said, after a moment.

"And that also is true," quoth the boy gravely. "But some time, late or early, one gets a glimpse of her—if one lies awake to see," he added softly.

The other glanced again at the book. "Let me look at it," he pleaded.

Sebastian smiled and reached over a hand to the book. "Don't touch. I'll show it thee." He untied the strings and spread it on the ground, throwing himself in front of it and resting his chin in his hands. "Come," he said, "I'll show it thee."

Erdman threw off his heavy cap and bent toward the book, with a little gesture of wonder. "I heard about Christoph's book—a good many times," he said softly. . . . "I didn't ever think I'd see

it." He reached out his hand and touched the open page.

"Nobody ever saw it," said Sebastian absently. He was humming to himself. "Listen to this!" he said eagerly. He hummed a few bars. "That's Buxtehude's—isn't it great!" His face went tumpty-tumpty with the notes, and the blue eyes shone. "But this is the one I like best—listen!" He turned over the pages rapidly. "Here it is. This is Reinken's. 'By the waters of Babylon, by the waters, by the waters of Babylon.'" He hummed the tune below his breath—and then louder and fuller. . . . The clear, sweet soprano of the notes died away softly. "Some day I shall play it," said Sebastian lingeringly. "Some day. See—here is the place for the harps! And here are the great horns. Listen!" His voice droned away at the bass and ran into

the swift high notes of the treble. "Some day I shall play it," he repeated wistfully.

Erdman's slow gaze was following the page. "I can't read so fast," he said enviously.

Sebastian smiled back. "I know it by heart—almost. When the moon was behind the clouds I waited. I sang them over and over."

"Very softly," said Erdman, as if seeing the picture of the boy and the darkened room.

"Very softly," assented Sebastian, "so that no one should hear. And now I have them all!" He spoke exultingly. "And next month I shall see Reinken. . . . I shall hear him play!"

The other stared at him. "But Reinken is at Hamburg," he said at last.

"And that, too, is so," said Sebastian smiling.

"And we go to Lüneburg——"

"And we go to Lüneburg!" repeated the boy, with a mocking lilt in his voice. "And Lüneburg is twenty miles from Hamburg. Hadst thought of that!" He laughed exultingly.

The other shook his head. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

Sebastian was fastening the big violin in place on his back. He looked up under smiling brows, as he bent to draw the last strap. Then he touched his sturdy legs with his hand and laughed. "I mean that these are the horses to carry me to Hamburg and back many times. I shall hear the great Reinken play!—And I, too, shall play!" he added proudly.

"Do you never doubt, Sebastian?" asked the other thoughtfully, as they moved on.

"Doubt?"

"Whether you will be a great musician? . . . Sometimes I see myself going back—" He paused as if ashamed to have said so much.

Sebastian shook his head. His blue eyes were following the clouds in the spring day. "Sometimes I doubt whether I am among the elect," he said slowly. "But never that I am to be a musician." His full lips puckered dreamily, and his golden head nodded, keeping slow time. "By the waters—" he broke out into singing. "Is it not wunderschön!" The blue eyes turned with a smile. "It is wunderschön! Ach—wunderschön! Is it not, Erdman?" He seemed to awake and laid his hand affectionately on the boy's shoulder.

The other nodded. "Yes, it is schön," he said wistfully.

"Come, I will teach it to thee!"

And the notes of Reinken's choral, "An den Wasserflüssen Babylon," floated with a clear, fresh sound on the spring morning air, two hundred years ago, and more, as two charity pupils walked along the road to Lüneburg.

# IV

A TALL man with keen eyes and a round stomach stood in the shadow of the Johanneskirche, lost in thought and humming to himself. Now and then he took off his glasses and rubbed them vigorously, and put them on again to peer absently down the street.

A heavy figure, clad in the faded blue uniform of the Michaelsschule, rounded the corner, puffing heavily.

"Ach, Kerlman!" The tall man started forward with a stride. "You are late."

The other nodded imperturbably.

"Ja, I am late. Those boys—I cannot make to hurry." He spoke as if assigning sufficient reason and wiped his brow.

A twinkle came into the keen eyes. "And one of them you have lost to-day,"

he said dryly. He cocked his eye a trifle toward the heavy church that rose behind them.

The other looked quickly around.

"That S'bastian—was he here?" he demanded.

"In there," replied the tall man, smiling. "No, no!" he laid his hand on his companion's arm as he started forward. "Let be—let be! . . . We must help him —that boy. You have not heard him play my organ. Wait!" He held up his hand. . . . Music was stealing from the gloomy shadows of the church.

"Come in," said the master. He pushed open a low door and they entered the great church. Far up in the loft, struck by a shaft of light from a gable in the roof, the boy was sitting, absorbed in sound. His face was bent to the keys as his hands hovered and paused over them

and drew forth the strangely sweet sounds that filled the great building.

The two musicians below stood looking up, their big heads nodding time. . . . Suddenly they paused and looked at each other with questioning glance. The music was quickening and broadening with a clear, glad reach of sound, and underneath it ran a swiftly echoing touch that bound the notes together and vibrated through them.

"How was he doing that?" whispered the small man excitedly. "You have taught him that?"

The other shook his head.

"Come, we will see."

Together they tiptoed through the dark church, softly—up to the organ-loft and peered in. The boy, oblivious to sight and sound, played on.

Kerlman leaned far forward, craning

his neck. He drew back, a look of stupefaction in his face. He held up his large thumb and looked at it soberly.

"What is it?" whispered the other.

"You see, Johannes Bohm?" He shook the fat thumb in his companion's face. "He does it with that!"

The master peered forward, incredulous. Slowly he crept up behind the boy, his eyes fastened on the moving hands. His shadow fell on the keys and the boy looked up. His face lighted with a smile.

"Go on," said the master sternly. His eyes still watched the hands. Slowly his big fingers reached over and grasped the thumb as it pressed lightly on a key. "Who told you that?" he demanded.

The boy looked down at it, puzzled. Then his face grew a little ashamed and doubtful. "It is wrong, I know," he admitted. "Yes, it is wrong."

"Who taught you?"

"Nay, no one would teach it. I just happened—one day. It makes it so easy."

"Yes, I see." The master's voice was curt.

"I will never do it again," said the boy humbly.

"No—you might play it for me once—just once, for me," said the master.

The boy's hands ran lovingly to the keys. They crept along the maze of sound and rose and fell in the changing rhythm. Shyly the small thumb darted out and found its key, and filled the great church with the tremulous, haunting call of note answering note.

The master bending over the keys wiped his brow and looked at the boy proudly, with a little wonder in his face. "Good. . . . Ach—but good, good!" he murmured softly.

The boy looked up quickly. His clear skin flushed. "May I use it—sometimes?" he asked, doubting.

Bohm gave a sharp, generous laugh. "You may use it." He laughed again. "All the world will use it!" he said, patting him on the back. "It is a great discovery. Play more."

The boy turned obediently to the keys, and while he played, the master slipped away. "Come down," he whispered to Kerlman, whose fat bulk filled the doorway. "Let us come down and get some beer. I am very dry this day."

Over their mugs, in the garden across the way, they looked at each other solemnly. Then they threw back their big heads and laughed till their sides shook and their wigs stood askew. Kerlman laid his fat thumb on the table and regarded

it respectfully. "Gott im Himmel!" he said.

Bohm nodded, his eyes twinkling.

The fat man raised his thumb from the table and twiddled it in the air. It fell with a stiff thud. "Ja, ja," he said, half impatient, half laughing. "How is one to do it—such fool tricks! Ja, ja!"

The keen eyes watching him had a proud look. "You know what he will be —that boy," he said exultingly. "He will be a great musician!"

"He will be a great bother," grumbled Kerlman. "First," he checked off the vices on his fingers—"first, he comes to us three weeks late—three weeks late—because his brother promises, and takes it back and waits to die—Bah!" He took a sip of beer and laid out another fat finger. "Second, he sings two octaves at

the same time—two octaves! Did one ever hear such nonsense! Third, he loses his voice, his beautiful voice, and sings no more at all." He shook his head heavily. "Fourth, he is running away to Hamburg to listen—always to Hamburg, to listen to Reinken, and coming back to be forgiven. Ja, ja! Seven times I have forgiven him. I think he is making ready now to go once more!" He glared at his companion.

Bohm nodded slowly. "I was to ask you for that to-day," he said, smiling.

"Ja! ja—I have thought so." He looked sadly at the four short fingers resting on the table. "And fifth—fifth —now what is that fifth? Ach, it is that! That thumb!" He scowled at it. "That crawling, snivelling, stiff-necked one!" He brought it down with a thump on the table. "To make me all my days

ashamed!" He held up the thumb and shook it scornfully.

High up in the Johanneskirche, in front of the big organ, the boy was playing—with head and hands and heart and feet and thumb—swaying to the music, lifting it from the great organ till it pealed forth, a mighty sound, and, breaking from the gloomy church, floated on the still air. . . . In the garden across the way, above their mugs, two old, white-wigged heads nodded and chuckled in the sun.

## V

THE Katherinenkirche was dark, and very still—except for a faint noise that came from a far corner of the upper left-hand gallery. The old verger, moving about in felt slippers below, paused now and then, and looked up as the sound grew louder or died away. It was like a mouse nibbling—and yet it was not a mouse.

The verger lighted a taper and prepared to ascend the stairs.

He heaved a sigh as he climbed the steep step, throwing the candle rays ahead of him into the gloom of the gallery. Not a sound. The silence of death was in the big church. . . . Muttering to himself, he traversed the long aisle at the top of the gallery, peering down into the vacant seats that edged the blackness below.

Suddenly he stopped. His eye had caught a gleam of something to the left of the last pillar. He snuffed the wavering taper with his fingers and leaned forward. A face grew out of the darkness and stood up.

"What are you doing?" demanded the old man, falling back a step.

"Eating my supper," said the youth. He held up a handkerchief. In the dim light two pieces of crisp, dry bread shaped themselves, and a generous odor of cheese floated out.

"In the church!" said the verger, with an accent of horror.

The youth's face regarded him pleadingly.

"Come away!" said the old man sternly.

He led the way down the steep stair, into a high, small room, lighted by a

narrow window over which cobwebs ran. "Here you may eat," he said laconically.

With a grateful glance the youth seated himself on the edge of a chair and opening his handkerchief took out a piece of the dry bread. His teeth broke it crisply, and crunched sharply upon it as he ate.

The old man nodded with satisfaction. "That is the mouse," he said.

The youth smiled faintly.

"Where do you come from?" asked the verger.

"From Lüneburg."

"You walked?"

The youth nodded.

"I have seen you before, here."

"Yes."

The old man watched him a minute. "You ought to have some beer with that

bread and cheese," he said. "Have you no coppers?"

The youth shook his head. "Reinken is my beer," he said, after a little. His face was lighted with a sweet smile.

The old man chuckled. "Ja, ja!" He limped from the room. Presently he returned with a pewter mug. It was foaming at the top. "Drink that," he commanded.

The youth drank it with hearty quaffs and laughed when it was done. "Ja, that is good!" he said simply.

The old man eyed him shrewdly. "In half an hour Reinken comes to play," he suggested craftily.

The youth started and flushed. "To-night?"

"Ja."

"I did not think he came at night," he said softly.

"Not often, but to-night. He wants to practise something for the festival—with no one to hear," he added significantly.

The boy looked at him pleadingly. His hand strayed to his pockets. They brought back two coppers, the only wealth he possessed.

The old man looked at him kindly and shook his head. "Nein," he said. "It is not for the money I shall do it. It is because I have seen you before—when he played. You shall hear him and see him. Come." He put aside the youth's impulsive hand, and led the way up a winding, dark stairway, through a little door in the organ-loft. Groping along the wall he slipped back a panel.

The boy peered out. Below him, a little to the left, lay the great organ, and far below in the darkness stretched the church. When he turned, the old man

was gone. Down below in the loft he watched his twinkling path as the taper flashed from candle to candle.

The great Reinken was a little late. He came in hurriedly, pushing back the sleeves of his scholar's gown as they fell forward on his hands. The hands were wrinkled, the boy noted, and old. He had forgotten that the master was old. Sixty years—seventy—ah, more than seventy. Nine years ago he was that—at the Bach festival. The boy's heart gave a leap. Seventy-nine—an old man! . . . he should never meet him in open festival and challenge him. There would not be time. . . . The music stole about him and quieted his pulse. He stood watching the face as it bent above the keys. It was a noble face. There was a touch of petulance in it, perhaps of pride and impatience in the quick glance that lifted now

and then. But it was a grand face, with goodness in it, and strength and power. The boy's heart went from him. . . . If he might but touch a fold of the faded gown—seek a blessing from the wrinkled hands on the keys. Spring was about him —white clouds and blossoms and the smell of fresh earth. "By the waters, the waters of Babylon; by the waters." The slender, delicate hands called out the notes one by one. Tears ran down the boy's face. Gropingly he felt for the door —only to seek a blessing of the hands. . . .

The old verger waited at the foot of the stairs, nodding in the dim light. He sprang up, startled and rubbing his eyes.

"I want to speak to him," said the youth humbly. "Only a word!"

The old man hesitated. The music had ceased and a slow step was coming down the church—an old man's step.

"Ja. Stand there," he whispered. "It shall be as you wish. Stand there!" He pushed the youth behind a pillar and stepped forward, his taper held aloft.

"Mein Herr," he said softly.

The organist paused and looked at him inquiringly. His face was very tired. "What wouldst thou, Wilhelm?" he said gently.

"It is a young man—" he stammered and paused.

"A young man?"

"He would speak with you, Mein Herr —but a word." The old man's voice waited.

"Speak with me? Does he bring credentials?"

"Nay, your honor——"

The great organist drew his gown about him. "I have not time, Wilhelm. Many seek me and life runs fast. I have

not time." He bowed courteously and moved on. As he passed the pillar a fold of his robe floated out and touched the hand of the youth, kneeling there, hidden in the dim light.

# VI

THE choirmaster smiled deprecatingly. He had small, obsequious eyes and narrow shoulders. "If the gracious Herr would be so good," he said, shrugging them a little. "The people have assembled." He glanced back over the fast-filling church and raised his eyebrows a trifle to indicate the honor.

Bach smiled gravely. A humorous look came into his eyes. "Let the service go on as usual," he said quietly. "When it is done, I will play—if time allows."

The choirmaster squeezed his moist palms and wiped an anxious brow. "And that, too—will be well," he murmured gratefully. "It will please the old organist," he added apologetically.

Bach nodded his head. "I had thought of that."

The other stared. "You know Reinken?" he asked.

The great organist shook his head. "I have seen him." The humorous smile played about his lips. "I have never spoken with him."

"He has been a great player—in his day," said the choirmaster. The note of apology in his voice had deepened.

"That I know," said Bach shortly.

"And now it is the people—they will not let him go," murmured the choirmaster despairingly. "Each Sunday he must play—every motet and aria and choral—and he is ninety-nine. Mein Gott!" The choirmaster wiped his brow.

"It is a long life," said Bach musingly. A sweet look had come into his face, like the sunlight on an autumn field. He raised his hand with a courteous gesture. "Let me be summoned later—at the right time."

The choirmaster bowed himself away.

Already the notes of the great organ filled the church. It was Reinken's touch upon the keys—feeble and tremulous here and there—but still the touch of the master.

With bent head Bach moved to a place a little apart and sat down. Curious glances followed him and whispers ran through the church, coming back to gaze at the severe, quiet face, with its look of sweetness and power.

He was unconscious of the crowd. His thoughts were with the old man playing aloft—the thin, serene face—the wrinkled hands upon the keys—twenty years. . . . The time had come—at last. . . . The music stole through his musings and touched him. He lifted his face as the sound swept through the church. The fire and strength of youth had gone from the

touch, but something remained—something inevitable and gentle that soothed the spirit and lifted the heart—like the ghost of a soul calling to itself from the past.

Bach started. A hand had fallen on his shoulder. It was the choirmaster, small-eyed and eager. Bach followed him blindly.

At the top of the stairs the choirmaster turned and waited for him. "At last we have the honor. Welcome to the greatest master in Germany!" he said smoothly, throwing open the door.

Without a word Bach brushed past him. His eye sought the great organ. The master had left the bench and sat a few steps below, leaning forward, his hands clasped on his cane, his white head nodding tremblingly above it. Far below the words of the preacher droned to a

close, and the crowd stirred and craned discreet necks.

Quietly the organist slipped into the vacant place. The Bach festival danced before him. . . . Uncle Heinrich on the platform—"The great Reinken—will no one of you promise?" His father's face smiling, his father's hand on his head. . . . Slowly his hands dropped to the keys.

The audience settled back with a sigh. At last they should hear him—the great Bach.

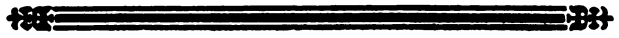
The silence waited, deep and patient and unerring, as it had waited a decade —the touch of this man. A sound crossed it and the audience turned bewildered faces. Question and dissent and wonder were in them. . . . Not some mighty fugue, as they had hoped—not even an aria, but a simple air from a quaint, old-fashioned choral,—"By the waters, the

waters of Babylon." They looked at one another with lifted brows. Reinken's choral!—and played with Reinken's very touch—a gentle, hurrying rhythm . . . as Reinken used to play it—when he was young. . . . In a moment they understood. Tears stood in bewildered eyes and a look of sweet good-will swept the church. He had given back to them their own. Their thought ran tenderly to the old man above, hearkening to his own soul coming to him, strong and swift and eternal, out of the years. Underneath the choral and above it and around, went the soul of Bach, steadfast and true, wishing only to serve, and through service making beautiful. He filled with wonder and majesty and tenderness the simple old choral.

A murmur ran through the church, a sound of love and admiration. And above,

with streaming eyes, an old man groped his way to the organ, his hands held out to touch the younger ones that reached to him. "I thought my work had died," he said slowly, "Now that it lives, I can die in peace."

# A WINDOW OF MUSIC



# A Window of Music

## I

"ABOUT so high, I should think," said the girl, with a swift twinkle. She measured off a diminutive man on the huge blue-and-white porcelain stove and stood back to survey it. "And about as big," she added reflectively.

Her sister laughed. The girl nodded again.

"And *terribly* homely," she said, making a little mouth. Her eyes laughed. She leaned forward with a mysterious air. "And, Marie, his coat is green, and his trousers are—white!"

The two girls giggled in helpless amusement. They had a stolid German air of family resemblance, but the laughing

eyes of the younger danced in their round setting, while the sleepy blue ones of the older girl followed the twinkling pantomime with a look of half protest.

"They were in the big reception-room," went on the girl, "and I bounced in on them. Mamma Rosine was giving him the family history—you and me."

They giggled again.

The younger one drew down her face and folded her hands in matronly dignity, gazing pensively at the blue-and-white stove, her head a little to one side.

"My own voice is alto, Herr Schubert, and my daughter Caroline's; but my daughter Marie has a *beautiful* soprano." She rolled her eyes, with an air of resigned sentiment, and shook the bobbing black curls gently from side to side. "And he just twiddled his thumbs like this, and grunted." She seized her

sister around her plump waist and shook her vigorously. "Don't you *see* it?" she demanded.

The older girl laughed hysterically, with disturbed eyes.

"Don't, Cara!" she protested.

The dark eyes bubbled again.

"And his hair curls as tight—" She ran a hand along her rumpled curls, then a look of dismay crossed the laughing face. She subsided into a chair and folded her hands meekly. The little feet, in their stout ankle-ties, swung back and forth beneath the chair, and the round, German face assumed an air of wholesome stupidity.

Her sister, whose slow glance had followed hers, gave a little gasp, and sank into a chair on the opposite side of the stove, in duplicate meekness.

The door at the other end of the room

had swung open, and a tall woman swept in, followed by a diminutive figure in green coat and white trousers. A pair of huge spectacles, mounted on a somewhat stumpy nose, peered absently from side to side as he approached.

"My daughters, Herr Schubert," said the tall lady, with a circumflex wave of her white hand that included the wax-like figures on each side the stove.

They regarded him fixedly and primly.

His glance darted from one to the other, and he smiled broadly.

"I haf seen the young *Fräulein* before," he said, indicating the younger with his fat hand.

The dark, round eyes gazed at him expressionless. His spectacles returned the gaze and twinkled.

"She has come into the reception-room while you were explaining about

the voice of Fräulein Marie," he said, with a glance at the other sister.

The waxlike faces shook a little.

The lady regarded them severely.

"She is only eleven," she murmured apologetically to the little man.

"Ja! So?" he muttered. His glance flashed again at the immovable face.

"Caroline, my child, come here," said her mother.

The child slipped down from the stiff chair and crossed to her mother's side. Her little hands were folded, and her small toes pointed primly ahead.

"My youngest daughter, Herr Schubert," said the lady, slipping an arm around the stiff waist. "Caroline, this is your new music tutor, Herr Schubert."

The child bobbed primly, and lifted a pair of dark, reflective eyes to his face.

His own smiled shrewdly.

"She will be a good pupil," he said; "it is the musical type." The green coat and white trousers bowed circumspectly to the small figure.

"Now, Marie"—the tall lady shook out her skirts—"Herr Schubert will try your voice. But first, Herr Schubert, will you not give us the pleasure?" She motioned politely toward the piano, and sank back with an air of fatigued sentiment.

He sat down on the stool and ran his white, fat fingers through his curling hair. It bristled a little. The fingers fell to his knees, and his big head nodded indecisively. Then it was thrown back, and the fingers dropped on the keys: the music of a Beethoven sonata filled the room.

The grand lady forgot her sentiment, and the little waxlike figures gave way. Their eager, tremulous eyes rested won-

deringly on the broad back of the player.

The white fingers had dropped on the keys with the lightness of a feather. They rose and flashed and twinkled, and ran along the keyboard with swift, steel-like touch. The door at the end of the room opened softly. A tall man entered. He looked inquiringly at the grotesque green-and-white figure seated before the piano, then his glance met his wife's, and he sank into a big chair by the door, a pleased look on his dark face. The younger child glanced at him shyly. He returned the look and smiled. The child's face brightened.

The door opened again, and a slight figure stood in the doorway. He looked approvingly toward the piano, and dropped into a chair at the other side of the door, twirling his long, light mustaches.

The player, wrapped in sound, was oblivious to the world outside. The music enveloped him and rose about him, transfiguring the plain, squat figure, floating above the spectacled face and crisp, curling locks. His hearers glanced approvingly at one another now and then, but no one spoke or moved. Suddenly they were aware that a new mood had crept into the notes. Quick, sharp flashes of fear alternated with passages of clear, sunlit strength, and underneath the changing melody galloping hoof-beats rose and fell.

The dark-eyed child sat poised forward, her hands clasped about her knees, her tremulous gaze fixed on the flying fingers. She started and caught her breath sharply. Faster and faster thudded the hoofs; the note of questioning fear beat louder, and into the sweet, answering

melody crept a note of doubt, undefined and terrible, a spirit echo of the flying hoofs. It caught up question and answer, and turned them to sharp, swift flight. The pursuing hoofs struck the sound and broke it; with a cry the child leaped to her feet. Her hands were outstretched, and her face worked. The man by the door turned slightly. He held out a quiet, imperious hand, and the child fled across the room, clasping the hand in both her own, and burying her face in his shoulder. The swift sound was upon them, around them, over them, sweeping past, whirling them in its leaping, gigantic grasp. It hesitated a second, grew strangely sweet and hushed, and dropped through a full, clear octave on a low note. It ceased. The air quivered. The player sat motionless, gazing before him.

The dark man sprang to his feet, his

face illumined, the child clinging to his hand. He patted the dark curls carelessly as he flashed a smile to the young man at the other side of the room.

"That's mine, Schönstein," he said exultantly; "your tenor voice won't carry that."

The other nodded half grudgingly.

They were both looking toward the player. He swayed a little on the stool, stared at the ceiling a moment, and swung slowly about, blinking uncertainly.

The older man stepped forward, holding out a quick hand.

"Wunderschön!" he said warmly. "What is it? Are there words to it? Can you get it for me?"

The tiny man seemed to shrink a little. He put out his fat hand and waited a moment before he spoke. The full, thick lips groped at the words.

"It is—it is something—of my own," he said at last.

They crowded about him, questioning and delighted.

"Have you published it? What is it?"

"'Der Erlkönig,'" said Schubert shortly. The child's face quivered.

"I know," she said.

Her father glanced down at her, smiling.

"What do you know?" he said gently.

"I read it," said the child, simply. She shivered a little. "The Erlking carried him off," she said. She covered her face, suddenly in tears. She was quivering from head to foot.

The count glanced significantly at his wife. She came forward and laid her hand on the child's shoulder.

"Come, Caroline. Come, Marie," she said. "Later, Herr Schubert, I shall have

the pleasure of thanking you." She swept from the room.

The three men remained, looking a little uncomfortably toward the closed door.

The count shrugged his shoulders and glanced at the musician.

"A very impressionable child," he said lightly.

"A very unusual child," returned the small man gravely. He was blinking absently at the count's dark face. "She has the temperament," he murmured softly; "she will learn."

The count beamed on him.

"We depend on you to teach her," he said suavely. "You will go with us next week to Zelitz?"

The young man bowed uncertainly. His full lips smiled doubtfully. "It is an honor," he said, "but I must work. There

is not time to lose. I must work." He moved his big head from side to side and twirled his fingers.

The count smiled genially.

"It shall be arranged—a little house by yourself, apart from the castle—a piano, absolute quiet, lessons only by your own arrangement." He spoke quietly, in the tone of a superior granting terms.

The thick lips opposite him were puckering a little, and the eyes behind the great spectacles blinked mistily.

"I must have time," repeated the little man—"time to think of it."

The count's face clouded a shade.

"We depend on you," he said. The tone had changed subtly. It was less assertive. "With the Baron von Schönstein—" he motioned toward his companion; the two young men bowed slightly—"with the

baron we have a fine quartet, and with you to train us—oh, you *must* come!" His face broke into a winning smile.

The young man smiled in return.

"I will come," he said; "but—free," he added.

"Free as the wind," assented the count easily. The note of patronage was gone.

A big sunny smile broke over the musician's face. It radiated from the spectacles and broadened the wide mouth.

"*Ach!* We shall do great things!" he announced proudly.

"Great things," assented the count. "And 'Der Erlkönig'—I must have 'Der Erlkönig.' Bring it with you."

"'Der Erlkönig' shall be yours," said Schubert grandly. There was the air of granting a royal favor in the round, green-and-white little figure as it bowed itself from the room.

In the hall he stumbled a little, looking uncertainly about. A small figure glided from a curtained window and approached him timidly.

"Your hat is on the next landing, Herr Schubert," she said.

He looked down at her. His big face flushed with pleasure. "You like my music," he said bluntly.

She shook her head gravely.

"It is terrible," she replied.

The spectacles glared at her.

"It hurts me here." She raised a small, dark hand to her chest.

The musician's eyes lighted.

"That is right," he said simply; "ja, that is right—it hurts."

They stood looking at each other in the dim light. The child's eyes studied the big face wistfully.

"I wish you would never play it again."

"Not play my 'Erlkönig!'" He glared at her.

She nodded slowly.

"Never," she said.

He waited a moment, looking at her sternly. He pushed his spectacles far up on the short curls and rubbed his nose vigorously.

The child's eyes waited on the queer, perturbed face. She gave a quick little sigh. Her lips had parted.

He looked down with a sudden big smile.

"I will never play it for you again," he said grandly. The spectacles descended swiftly, the door banged behind him, and the child was left alone in the great dim hall.

## II

THE heat of the day was nearly spent, but the leaves of the oaks hung motionless. The two young men walking beneath them had bared their heads. One of them glanced up now and then, as if looking for coolness in the green canopy.

"It will rain before night," said the baron, casually, noting the glance. His lithe figure, in its white suit and blue tie, showed no sign of heat or fatigue.

The musician, puffing beside him, wiped a handkerchief across his warm face.

"Ja, it will rain," he assented hopefully.

The baron glanced at him, smiling.

"You find ten miles a good stretch," he remarked. "We went too far, perhaps."

"Nein, not too far. We have had great talk," responded Schubert. His face under its mask of perspiration shone glori-

ously. He glanced down a little ruefully at his short, fat legs in their white casings. "But my legs they do not talk," he announced naïvely. "Ja, they are very weary, perhaps; but my soul is not weary." He struck his breast a resounding blow with the palm of his hand and straightened his short body.

The baron laughed musically.

A low, sweet sound, stealing among the oaks, answered the laugh. They stopped short, looking at each other. The sound came again, a far-off, haunting peal, with a little catch and sob in its breath.

They stole swiftly forward on tiptoe. Among the trees a roof and the outline of a small building glimmered. It was covered with dark ivy. Smoke came from the chimney, and through the open window drifted the strange, alluring sound.

"The house of the little folk of the wood," whispered Schubert, pressing forward.

"The wash-house," returned the baron, with a laugh.

The sound had ceased. The wood, in the soft heat, was very still.

"It is Marka," said the baron, glancing toward the house. "Marka has charge of the linen. I heard her the other day, in one of the corridors, singing; but Fritz hushed her up before she'd begun. She's a Hungarian——"

"Hush!" Schubert lifted a finger.

The music had begun again. The sadness was gone from it. It laughed and smiled to itself, and grew merry in a sweet, shy fashion that set the air about them astir in little rippling runs.

Schubert had started forward.

"I must have it!" he said impetuously.

"Take care!" warned Schönstein; "she is a witch."

The musician laughed, stealing away among the tree-trunks. He moved softly forward, his short fingers fumbling at his pockets. A torn envelope and the stub of a pencil rewarded the search. His face lighted as he grasped the pencil more firmly in his fingers, moistening it at his thick lips; he approached the open window.

He peered uncertainly into the dim room. By the fireplace stood a lithe, quick figure, sorting the pile of linen at her side. As she lifted each delicate piece she examined it for holes or rents. Careless little snatches of song played about her lips as she worked.

The torn envelope rested on the sill, and the stubby pencil flew across its surface. The big face of the musician,

bent above it, was alight with joy. The sound ceased, and he straightened himself, pushing back the hat from his brow, and gazing fondly at the little dots on the torn bit of paper.

The girl looked up with a start. The shadow had fallen on her linen. She gazed with open, incredulous lips at the uncouth figure framed in the window.

A broad smile wreathed the big face.

"Go on, Marka," he said. He nodded encouragement.

She looked down at the pillow-slip in her hands, and back again to the face in the window. The linen slip was plaited uncertainly in her fingers.

"Go on," said Schubert peremptorily. "You were singing. What was it, that tune? Go on."

She looked up again with bold shyness, and shook her head.

The face glared at her.

She smiled saucily, and, putting two plump hands into her apron pockets, advanced toward the window. Her steps danced a little.

Franz stared at the vision. He took off his spectacles and rubbed them, blinking a little.

"Waugh!" he said.

She laughed musically.

He replaced the spectacles, and looked at her more kindly.

She was leaning on the other side of the casing, her arms folded on the sill. Her saucy face was tilted to his.

He bent suddenly, and kissed it full on the mouth.

She started back, fetching him a ringing slap on the cheek.

"You ugly thing!" she said. She laughed.

Franz gazed serenely at the sky, a pleased smile on his lips.

"You're too ugly to look at," said the girl promptly.

He looked down at her and smiled.

"That tasted good," he said.

She pouted a little and glanced at the door.

His glance followed hers.

"Sing me some more," he suggested craftily.

She threw back her head, and her lips broke into a strange, sweet sound. The dark eyes were half veiled, and her full throat swelled.

The wood about them darkened as she sang. Swift birds flashed by to their nests, and the green leaves quivered a little. A clash broke among the tree-tops; they swayed and beat heavily, and big drops fell. The girl's eyes flashed wide.

The song ceased on her lips. She glanced at the big drops on the sill and then at the open door.

"Come in," she said shyly.

He opened the door and went in.

## III

"WE feared that you were not coming, Herr Schubert," said the countess suavely.

The group had gathered in the music-room. . . . The storm had ceased, and a cool breeze came through the window. Outside in the castle grounds dim lights glimmered.

The young man advanced into the group a little awkwardly, rubbing his eyes as if waking from a dream.

The baron, standing by the piano, glanced at him sharply under lowered lids. His lips took on a little smile, not unkind, but full of secret amusement.

The musician passed him without a glance, and, seating himself at the piano, threw back his head with an impatient gesture. He turned swiftly the leaves of

music that stood on the rack before him.

"Sing this," he said briefly.

He struck a few chords, and they gathered about him, taking up their parts with a careless familiarity and skill. It was Haydn's "Creation." They had sung it many times, but a new power was in it to-night. The music lifted them. The touch on the keys held the sound, and shaped it, and filled it with light.

When it was finished they glanced at one another. They smiled; then they looked at the player. He sat wrapped in thought, his head bowed, his fingers touching the keys with questioning touch. They moved back noiselessly and waited. When he was like this, they did not disturb him.

The melody crept out at last, the strange, haunting Hungarian air, with

unrest and sadness and passion and sweetness trembling through it.

The baron started as he heard it. He moved carelessly to the window and stood with his back to the room, looking out.

The countess looked up with a startled air. She glanced inquiringly toward her husband. He was leaning forward, a look of interest on his dark face. The child at his knee shrank a little. Her eyes were full of a strange light. On the opposite side of the room her sister Marie sat unmoved, her placid doll eyes resting on the player with a look of gentle content.

The passionate note quickened. Something uncanny and impure had crept into it. It raised its head and hissed a little and was gone, gliding away among the low notes and losing itself in a rustling wave of sound. . . . The music trembled

a moment and was still; then the passion burst in a flood upon them. Dark chasms opened; strange, wild fastnesses shut them in; storm and license and evil held them. Blinding flashes fell on them. Slowly the player emerged into a wide sunlit place. The music filled it. Winds blew from the four quarters to meet it, and the air was full of melody.

The count stirred a little as the last notes fell.

"A strange composition," he said briefly.

The child at his knee lifted her head. She raised a tiny hand and brought it down sharply, her small face aglow with suppressed anger.

"It was not good!" she said.

The player turned to look at her. His big face worked strangely.

"No, it was not good," he said. "I

shall not play that again. But it is great music," he added, with a little laugh.

The count looked at him shrewdly. He patted the child's trembling hand.

"Now," he said soothingly, "something to clear away the mists! 'Der Erlkönig.' We have never had it; bring it out."

Schubert hesitated an instant. He glanced at the child.

"That music—I have it not, Herr Count—I left it in Vienna."

The count moved impatiently.

"Play it from memory," he said.

The musician turned slowly to the piano.

The child's eyes followed him. She shivered a little.

He swung back with a swift gesture, feeling absently in his pockets.

"A piece of tissue-paper," he mur-

mured. He had extracted a small comb from one of his pockets. He regarded it thoughtfully. "If I had one little piece of paper—" He looked about him helplessly.

"There is some in the music-rack, Marie. Find it for him," said the count.

The girl found it and laid it in his hand.

He turned back to the piano, adjusting and smoothing it. His broad back was an effective screen. The group waited, a look of interest on their faces.

Suddenly he wheeled about, his hands raised to his mouth, the comb, thinly covered with tissue-paper, at his lips, and his fat cheeks distended. His eyes behind the big spectacles glowed portentously.

They gazed at him in astonishment.

He drew a full breath and drove it forth, a lugubrious note. With scowling brows and set face he darted the instru-

ment back and forth across his puckered lips. It wailed and shrieked, and out of the noise and discord emerged, at a galloping trot, "Der Erlkönig!"

The child, who had been regarding him intently, threw back her head, and a little laugh broke from her lips. Her face danced. She came and stood by the player, her hand resting on his knee.

Herr Schubert puffed and blew, and "The Erlking" pranced and thumped. Now and then he stumbled and fell, and the fugitives flew fast ahead.

The player's face was grave beyond belief, filled with a kind of fat melancholy, and tinged with tragic intent.

The faces watching it passed from question to amusement, and from amusement to protest.

"Nein, nein, mein Herr!" said the countess, as she wiped her mild blue

eyes and shook her blond curls. "Nicht mehr! nicht mehr!"

With a deep, snorting sob the sound ceased. The comb dropped from his lips, and the player sat regarding them solemnly. A smile curved his big lips.

"Ja," he said simply, "that was great music. I have made it myself, that music."

With laughter and light words the party broke up. At a touch from the count the musician lingered. The others had left the room.

The count walked to the open window and stood for a moment staring into the darkness. Then he wheeled about.

"What was it you played?" he said swiftly.

"A Hungarian air," replied Schubert briefly.

The count looked incredulous.

"It was your own," he said.

"Partly," admitted the musician.

The count nodded.

"I thought so." He glanced toward the piano. "It is not too late——"

Schubert shrugged his shoulders.

"I told the child—you heard—I cannot play it again, that music."

The count laughed lightly.

"As you like." He held out a hand. "Good night, my friend," he said cordially. "You are a strange man."

The grotesque, sensitive face opposite him quivered. The big lips trembled a little as they opened.

"I am *not* a strange man," said Schubert vehemently. "That music—it was —the devil!"

The count laughed again lightly. He held out his hand.

"Good night," he said.

## IV

A SOFT haze hung over Zelitz. The moonlight, filtering through it, touched the paths and shrubs with shifting radiance and lifted them out of shadow. Under the big trees the darkness lay black, but in the open spaces it had given way to a gray, elusive whiteness that came and went like a still breathing of the quiet night.

A young girl, coming down one of the winding paths, paused a moment in the open space to listen. The hand that held her trailing, shimmering skirts away from the gravel was strong and supple, and the face thrown back to the moonlight wore a tense, earnest look; but the dark eyes in their curving lids were like a child's eyes. They seemed to laugh subtly. It may have been that the moonlight shifted across them.

A young man, standing in the shadow of the trees, smiled to himself as he watched her. He stepped from beneath the trees and crossed the open space between them.

The girl watched him come without surprise.

"It is a beautiful night, Herr Schubert," she said quietly as he stood beside her.

"A wonderful night, my lady," he answered softly.

She looked down at him.

"Why are you not in the castle, playing?" she demanded archly.

"The night called me," he said.

She half turned away.

He started forward.

"Do not go," he breathed.

She paused, looking at him doubtfully.

"I came to walk," she said. She moved away a few steps and paused again, look-

ing back over her shoulder. "You can come——"

He sprang to her side, and they paced on in silence.

She glanced at him from under her lids.

His big face wore a radiant, absent-minded look. The full lips moved softly.

"What are you thinking of?" she said swiftly.

He flushed and came back to her.

"Only a little song; it runs in my head."

"Hum it to me," she commanded.

He flushed again and stammered:

"Nein, nein; it is not yet born."

Her eyes were on the shifting light.

"Will you play it to me when it is done?" she asked softly.

"You know that I will."

She waited a moment.

"You have never dedicated a song to

me," she said slowly. "There are the four to my father—but he is the count; and the one last year for Marie—why to Marie?—and one for them all. But not one least little song for me!" The words had dropped under her breath. Her dark eyes were veiled. No one could say whether they laughed now.

He looked up with a swift, brusque gesture.

"They are all yours; you know it." The low voice rebuked her gently. "For six years they are yours—all that I have done." The face was turned toward her. It was filled with pleading and a kind of gentle beauty, clumsy and sweet.

She did not look at it.

"There is one that I should like to hear," she said musingly. "You played it once, years ago, on a comb. I have not heard it since." She laughed sweetly.

Schubert smiled. The hurt look stole from his eyes.

"You will hear it—my 'Erlkönig'?" he demanded.

She nodded.

"I will play it to you when I come back," he said contentedly.

She stopped short in the path.

"When you come back!" The subtle eyes were wide. They were not laughing.

"Ja, I shall——"

"Where are you going?"

He rubbed his great nose in the moonlight.

"Nein, I know not. I know I must go——"

She stopped him impatiently.

"You will not go!" she said. He turned his eyes and looked at her. After a moment her own fell. "Why will you go?" she asked.

The face with its dumb look was turned toward her.

"That little song—it calls me," he said softly. "When it is done I will come back again—to you."

She smiled under the lids.

"That little song—is it for me?" she asked sweetly.

"Ja, for you." He looked pleadingly at the downcast face. "The song—it is very sweet; it teases me."

The lids quivered.

"It comes to me so close, so close!" He was silent, a rapt look of listening in his face. It broke with a swift sigh. "Ach! it is gone!"

She glanced at him swiftly.

"I thought the songs came quickly."

He shook his head.

"The others, yes; but not this one. It is not like the others. It is so sweet

and gentle—far away—and pure like the snow. . . . It calls me—" He broke off, gazing earnestly at the beautiful, high-bred face, with its downcast eyes.

"Nein! I cannot speak it," he said softly. "But the song it will speak it for me—when I come."

She lifted her head, and held out her hand with a gesture half shy and very sweet.

The moonlight veiled her. "I shall wait," she said gently—"for the song."

He held the slender hand for a moment in his own; then it was laid lightly against his lips, and turning, he had disappeared among the shadows.

# V

"HALLO, Franz! Hallo—there!"

Two young men, walking rapidly along the low hedge that shuts in the Zum Biersack from the highway, lifted heated faces and glanced toward the enclosure, where a youth seated at one of the tables had half risen from his place, and was gesticulating with the open book in his hand to vacant seats beside him.

"It is Tieze," said Schubert, with a smile. "Come in."

His companion nodded. The next instant a swift waiter had served them, and three round, smiling faces surveyed one another above the foaming mugs.

"Ach!" said Tieze, looking more critically at the shorter man, "but you have grown thin, my friend. You are not so great."

Schubert smiled complacently. He glanced down at his rotund figure.

"Nein, I am little," he assented affably.

His companions broke into a roar of laughter.

"Drink her down, Franz! drink her down!" said Tieze, lifting the heavy stein.

Schubert wiped the foam from his lips.

"Ja, that is good!" He drew a deep sigh.

He reached out his hand for the open volume that lay by his companion's hand. It was given over in silence, and he dipped into it as he sipped the beer, smiling and scowling and humming softly. Now and then he lifted his head and listened. His eyes looked across the noisy garden into space.

His companions ignored him. They

laughed and chatted and sang. Other young men joined the group, and the talk grew loud. It was the Sunday festival of Warseck.

Schubert smiled absently across the babel.

"A pencil—quick!" he said in a low tone to Tieze. His hand holding the open book trembled, and the big eyes glowed with fire.

Tieze fumbled in his pockets and shook his head.

Schubert glared at the careless group.

"A pencil, I tell you!" he said fiercely.

There was a moment's lull. Nobody laughed. Some one thrust a stub of pencil across the table. A fat young man sitting at Schubert's side seized it and, drawing a few music-bars on the back of a programme, pushed it on to him.

"Ach!" said Schubert, with a grateful

sigh, "Goot—goot!" In another moment he was lost.

The talk grew louder. Hurried waiters rushed back and forth behind his chair with foaming mugs and slices of black bread, and gray and brown. Fiddles squeaked, and skittle-players shouted. Now and then the noise broke off and changed to the national air, which the band across the garden played loudly. But through it all Schubert's big head wagged absently, and his short-sighted eyes glared at the barred lines and flying pencil.

Suddenly he raised his head with a snort. His spectacles flew to his forehead, and his round face smiled genially at the laughing group.

"Done?" asked the fat young man with a smile. He reached out his hand for the scrawled page.

Schubert drew it jealously back.

"Nein," he said quickly.

Tieze, who had come around the table, stood behind them, scanning the barred lines and the scattered shower of notes. He raised a quick hand to the group about the table.

"Gott im Himmel!" he said excitedly. "Listen, you dunderheads!"

Silence fell on the group. Every glance was turned to him. He hummed softly a few bars of sweetest melody—under the garden's din. . . . The notes stopped in a choking gasp, Schubert's hand on his throat.

"Stop that!" he said hoarsely. The paper had been thrust loosely into his coat pocket. His face worked fiercely.

Tieze drew back, half laughing, half alarmed.

"Franz! Franz!" he said.

The other brushed his hand across his forehead and drew a deep breath.

"Ja," he said slowly, "I might have killed you."

Tieze nodded. A look of curiosity held his face.

"It is schön!" he said softly. "Schön!"

Schubert turned abruptly.

"It is not for you. . . . For years I search that song, over mountains, in the storm, in the sunshine; but it has never come—till here." His eye swept the crowded place. "Now I have it"—he patted the rough coat pocket—"now I have it, I go away."

## VI

THE girl sitting on a rough bench by the low building stirred slightly. She glanced behind her. Deep blackness in the wood, shifting moonshine about her. She breathed a quick sigh. It was like that other night. Ah, he would not come!

Her face fell forward into her slender fingers. She sat immovable. The shadow trembled a little, but the girl by the low house was blind and deaf. Melodies of the past were about her. The shadow moved, but she had no eyes to see; slowly it travelled across the short-cropped grass, mystically green and white in the waning moon. Noiselessly it came; it sank noiselessly into the shadow of the low house. A sound clicked and was still. But the girl had not moved—memory

music held her. It moved upon her spirit, low and sweet, and stirred the pulse, and breathed itself away.

She stirred a little, and laid her cheek upon her palm. Her opened eyes rested carelessly on the ground; her look flashed wide and leaped to the lattice window beside her, and back again to the ground. A block of light lay there, clear and defined. It was not moonlight or dream-light. She sprang to her feet and moved a step nearer the window. Then she stopped, her hand at her side, her breath coming quickly. The high, sweet notes were calling from the night. Swiftly she moved. The door gave lightly beneath her touch. She crossed the smooth floor. She was by his side. The music was around them, above them, shimmering. It held them close. Slowly he turned his big, homely face and looked at her, but the

music did not cease. It hovered in the air above, high and pure and sweet. The face of the young countess bent lower; a look of tenderness waited in her subtle eyes.

He sprang to his feet, his hands outstretched to ward it off.

"Nein. It is not *I*. It is the music. You shall not be bewitched!" His hands made swift passes, as if he would banish a spell.

She caught them to her and waited.

"Am I bewitched—Franz?" she said at last. The voice was very low. The laughing eyes were looking into his.

"Ja, you are bewitched," he returned stoutly.

"And you?"

"I have only love for you."

"And I have only love for you," she repeated softly. She hummed a bit of the

melody and stopped, looking at him sweetly. "It is my song," she questioned —"the song you went to seek for me?"

He lifted his head proudly.

"It came for you."

She nodded with brimming eyes. Her hands stole softly up to the big face. They framed it in, with its look of pride, and touched it gently. "Dear face!" she breathed, "dear ugly face—my music face!"

They moved swiftly apart. The figure of the count was in the open doorway.

She moved forward serenely and slipped her hand in his.

"I am here, Father Johann," she said quietly.

His fingers closed about the white ones.

"Go outside, Cara. Wait there till I come."

Her dark, troubled eyes looked into his. They were not laughing now.

"Nay, father," she said gently, "it is you who will wait outside—while we say farewell."

The count regarded her for a long moment, then he turned toward the young musician, his face full of compassion and a kind of envy.

"My friend," he said slowly, "for five minutes I shall leave her with you. You will go away—forever."

Schubert bowed proudly. His eyes were on the girl's face.

As the door closed, she turned to him, holding out her hands.

He took them in his, and they stood silent, looking into each other's eyes.

She drew a long breath.

"What do people say when they are dying?" she asked.

"Nein, I know not." His voice trembled.

"There is so much, and it is nothing," said the girl dreamily. She moved a step toward the piano, his hands locked fast in hers. "Tell me again you love me!" she whispered.

He took off the great spectacles, and laid them beside the scrawled page.

"Look in my eyes," he said gently. A kind of grandeur had touched the homely features. The soul behind them looked out.

She bent toward him. A little sob broke from her lips. She lifted the hands and moved them swiftly toward the keys.

"Tell me!" she said.

With a smile of sadness, he obeyed the gesture.

Melody filled the room. It flooded the moonlight. The count, pacing back and

forth, halted, a look of bewilderment in his face. He stepped swiftly toward the door.

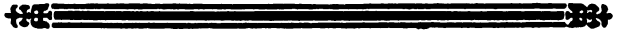
The lights on the piano flared uncertainly. They fell on the figure at the piano. It loomed grotesque and grim, and melted away in flickering shadow. Music played about it. Strains of sadness swept over it in the gloom and drifted by, and the sweet, high notes rose clear. A little distance away the figure of the young countess stood in the shifting light. Her clasped hands hung before her. She swayed and lifted them, groping, and turned. Her father sprang to her. Side by side they passed into the night. The music sounded about them far and sweet.

Franz Schubert, with his youth and his wreaths of fame, his homely face and

soul of fire, is dead these many years; but the soul of fire is not dead. . . . The Countess Esterhazy, framed for love, is dust and ashes in her marble house. The night music plays over her tomb.

The night music plays wherever night is.

# FREDERIC CHOPIN—A RECORD



# Frederic Chopin—A Record

PARIS, October 6, 1837.

IT has rained all day. No one has been in. No fantasies have crept to my soul. Nothing to break the ceaseless, monotonous drip, drip, drip on my heart. No one but a *garçon* from the florist's bringing violets—the great swelling bunch of English violets—Jane Stirling's violets! Heavens, what a woman! I am like her now, in the little mirror on my desk. Merely thinking of her has made me so! The great aquiline nose—the shrewd, canny Scotch look—and the big mouth—alas, that mouth! When it smiles I am enraged. Oh, Jane! Why dost thou haunt me, night and day, with thy devotion and thy violets—and thy

nose! Let women be gentle, with soft glances that thrill—soft, dark flames. Constantia's glance? Constantia? Nay, fickle. Fickle moon of yesternight that drips—drips—drips. Will it never cease! I cannot play the pain away. It eats into my heart. Yet life was made for joy and love—love—love—sweet as dream-light —sweet as music—sad and sweet and gay—love! The weariness rests upon me. The silver clock ticks. It chimes the pain. One—two—three—nine—ten. The night wears slowly. I must break the burden. I will look into a woman's face, and rest.

PARIS, October 10, 1837.

It was a thought of inspiration. I threw off the ugly loose coat and my *ennui* together. I plunged into the fragrant bath. Little tunes hummed to me as I rose from it. I put on clean, fresh

linen—fine as silk—and evening dress. My blood coursed freely, and the scent of violets came to me sweetly. It followed through the wet, dripping streets, and clung to me as I ascended the softly carpeted stair to the *salon* of the Countess Czosnowska. I was merry in my soul. Then a shadow crossed me. It fell upon my shoulder, and I turned in fear to look. No one—except a naked Venus on the wall. My good angel drew me on. I have seen her thrice since then. It seems a day. She came and looked into my eyes, while I played. It was fairy-music, witching and sweet—a little sad—the fairies of the Danube. My heart danced with them in the fatherland. Her eyes looked into mine. Sombre eyes—strange eyes. What did they say? She leaned forward on the piano, gazing at me passionately. My soul leaped back and stood at

bay. The strange eyes smiled. It was a man's face—breadth and depth and coarseness—and the strange, sad eyes. I longed for them and shrank upon myself. She moved away. Later we spoke together—commonplaces. Liszt brought her to me, where I was sitting alone. Camellias framed us in. A sweet shadow rested on my heart. She praised my playing—gently. She understood. But the strong, sad, ugly face! I have seen her twice since then. In her own *salon*, with the noblest minds of France about her—and once alone. Beautiful face—haunting sadness! Aurora—sweetest name! She loves me! Day-spring—loved-one! The night lags——

PARIS, November 5, 1838.

We are to go away together—to the South. There is a strange pain at my

chest, a haunting cough. It will not let me go. I shall escape it—in the South. She cares for me, day and night. Her sweet breath! My mother's face is sad in my dreams. I shall not dream when the sun shines warm upon me—in the South——

MAJORCA, November 16, 1838.

We are alone—two souls—in this island of the sea. The surf beats at night. I lie and listen. Jane Stirling came to see us off. She brought violets—great, swelling English violets. I smell them in the mouldy cloister cells, night and day. This monks' home is cold and bleak. The wind rattles through it, and at night it moans. A chill is on me. When I cough it echoes through my heart. I love the light. Sweet music waits the light. I will not die. The shadow haunts.

But life is strong. Jane's violets on my grave! I will not die.

PARIS, March 14, 1839.

Paris—gay, live Paris! The cabs rattle sweetly on the stones. I can breathe now. The funeral dirge will wait. In Marseilles we came upon Nourrit—dead. Poor Adolphe! He could not bear the weight. A crash into eternity! I knew it all. The solemn mass ascended for his soul—and high above it all, I spoke in swelling chords—mystery—pain—justice—the fatherland. A requiem for his soul—for Chopin's soul? And Heine smiles. Brave Heine! With death upon his heart—inch by inch he fights it—with laughs. I saw him yestermorn. His great eyes winked. They made a bet at me. He will outlast us yet, he swore, ten years. Brave fight! Shall I live to see it stop—

gasp—the last quip fail on sunny lips? I peer into the years between. They hang among the mists. Aurora comes. It is a week. Sweet day-spring!

NOHANT, October 11, 1839.

They tell me I am well. The cough has ceased and the pain. But deep below, it beats. Aurora's eyes are veiled. Only when I play will they glow. They fill the world with light. I sit and play softly —her pen moves fast. She can write with music—music—over her—around—Chopin's music, whispered low—but clear as love. They said once George Sand was clever. It is Chopin's touch that makes her great. It eats the soul. For thee, Aurora, I could crawl upon the earth. I would not mind. I give thee all. I ask a glance—a touch—a smile when thou art weary—leave to love thee and to make

sweet music. Thou wilt not be too cruel, love—with thy veiled eyes?

NOHANT, May 3, 1847.

I must have money. I am a burden—sick—a cough that racks the soul. Aurora comes but seldom. The cough hurts her. She is busy. I do not look into her eyes. I lie and gaze across the field. It stretches from my window—sunny, French field! Miles away, beneath a Polish sky, I see my mother's eyes. Unshed tears are heavy. "Fritz, little Fritz," she calls to me, "thou wilt be a great musician. Poland will be proud of thee!" Poland—dear land—proud of Frederic Chopin! My heart is empty. It aches.

NOHANT, June 1, 1847.

It is over. Life has stopped. A few years more or less, perhaps. But never

life again. I do not write the words. They hammer at my brain. She spoke so sharply—and my soul was sick. I did not think she could. If she had waited—I would not have tarried long, not too long, Aurora. Hadst thou waited—weary of the burden, the sick burden of my complaint! Money—I shall work—Waltzes that the public loves—and pays for. Mazurkas from a torn heart! I shall work—a little while—20,000 francs to set me free! I will die free!

PARIS, June 10, 1847.

Strange fortune that besets a man! The 20,000-franc paper is in my hand. I turn it. I look at it. Jane Stirling and her goodness haunt my gloom. She only asks to give. Strange, uncouth, Scotch lady! With thy heart of gold, thy face of iron, and thy foot of lead!

Thy francs lie heavy in my hand. "Master," she writes my name. She only asks to give. But women should be gentle, with soft, dark eyes that thrill. The day has closed. I shall die free!

STIRLING CASTLE, SCOTLAND,
June 16, 1848.

I am lying in a great chamber of the castle. The house is still. The guests have creaked to their rooms. The last hoarse voice is hushed. When I played for them below, my fingers twitched and my heart ached with the numbness. I could have cried with weariness and pain. The faithful Daniel lifted me like a child. He has undressed me and laid me here among the swelling pillows. The light burns fitfully. It dances among the shadows. Outside the bleak Scotch mist

draws near. It peers into my window. It is Jane's soul—soft and floating wool—and clammy. My heart is ice—ingratitude and ice. She sits beside me all the day. We talk of music! Strange, disjointed talk—with gaps of common sense—hero-worship—and always the flame that burns for me—slow and still. She has one thought, one wish—to guard my days with sweet content. And in my soul the quenchless fire burns. It eats its way to the last citadel. I have not long to wait. I shall not cry out with the pain. Its touch is sweet—like death. "I'll beat you yet," brave Heine writes. His soul is emptied. But the lips laugh. Jane's slow Scotch eyes keep guard at death. My lightest wish grows law. The treasures of my *salon*—shall they be hawked about the town? "Chopin's wash-basin —going!—for ten sous—going!" My pic-

tures, caskets, tapestries, each rug and chair that I have loved, and the great piano with its voice and soul of love. She will guard them. Faithful lady! Cruel one—my soul curses thee, crushes thee forever—false dawn that could not stand the sun's deep kiss—Aurora. Unrest—unrest—will it never cease? Shall I lie quiet? There will be Polish earth upon me. The silver goblet holds it. It is here beside me now. I reach and touch it with my hand. Dear land of music and the soul! The silver cupful from thy teeming fields is always near. It shall spill upon my breast—upon this racked and breathless burden! But the heart within that beats and burns—it shall be severed, chord by chord—it shall return to the land that gave it. Dear Poland! I see thee in the mists—with my mother's brow and mouth and chin. Poland that

sings and weeps—sad land. My heart is thine! Cleanse it in sweet-smelling earth! In thy bosom it shall rest—at last—rest!

# THE MAN WITH THE GLOVE

# The Man With the Glove

## I

"HO, *Tiziano!* Ala-ala-*ho! Tizi-ah-no!*"

The group in the gondola raised a merry call. The gondola rocked at the foot of a narrow flight of steps leading to a tall, sombre dwelling. The moonlight that flooded the gondola and steps revealed no sign of life in the dark front.

The young man sitting with his back to the gondolier raised the call again: "What, ho!—Tiziano!" The clear, tenor voice carried far, and occupants of passing gondolas turned to look and smile at the dark, handsome youth as they drifted past.

The door at the top of the steps opened

and Titian ran lightly down. He carried in his hand a small lute with trailing purple ribbons, and the cap that rested on his thick curls was of purple velvet. He lifted it with gentle grace as he stepped into the gondola and took the vacant seat beside a young woman facing the bow of the boat.

Her smiling face was turned to him mockingly. "Late again, Signor Cevelli, and yet again!" She plucked at the strings of a small instrument lying on her lap, and the notes tinkled the music of her words.

"Pardon, Signora, a thousand pardons to you and to your gracious lord!" He bowed to the man opposite him.

"Giorgio? Oh—Giorgio doesn't mind." Her soft lips smiled. "He's too big and lazy. He never minds." Her laugh rose light and sweet. The three men joined in.

The boat shot into midstream. It threaded its way among the brilliant craft that floated in the moonlight, or shot by them under vigorous strokes. Many glances were turned toward the boat as it passed. The face of Titian was well known and that of the woman beside him was the face of many pictures; while the big man opposite—her husband—the famous Giorgione, was the favorite of art-loving Venice. It was a group to attract attention at any time. But it was the fourth member of the group that drew the eyes and held them to-night.

He was a stranger to Venice, newly come from Rome—known in Venice years ago, it was whispered—a mere stripling. Now the face and figure had the beauty and the strength of manhood. . . . A famous courtesan touched her red-gold

locks and laughed sweetly as she drifted by. But the sombre, dark face with the inscrutable eyes and the look of power did not turn. He sat, for the most part, a little turned away, looking at the waves dancing with leaden lights under the moon and running in ripples from the boat. Now and then his lips curved in a smile at some jest of his companions, or his eyes rested on the face of the woman opposite—and filled with gentle, wondering light.

Titian, watching him from beside the young woman, marvelled at the look of mystery and the strength. He leaned forward, about to speak—but Giorgione stayed him with a gesture.

"The Fondaco," he said, raising his hand to the gondolier. "Ho, there! Halt for the Fondaco!"

The boat came slowly to rest at the foot of the great building that rose white

and gray and new in the half light. Giorgione's eye ran lovingly along the front. "To-morrow," he said, "we begin the last frescos. You, Titian, on the big façade to the south, and Zarato and I—" He laid his hand affectionately on the arm of the young man at his side, "Zarato and I on the inner court."

The youth started and looked up. His eyes studied the massive walls, with the low, arching porticos and long unbroken lines. "A noble piece of work," he said.

Giorgione nodded. "German and Venetian mixed." He laughed softly. "With three Venetians at the frescos—we shall see, ah—we shall see!" He laughed again good-humoredly.

The boat shot under the Rialto and came out again in the clear moonlight.

"To-morrow," said Giorgione, looking back, "to-morrow we begin."

"To-morrow Zarato comes to me—for

his portrait." Titian spoke quickly, almost harshly. His eyes were on the young man's face.

The gondola stirred slightly. Every one looked at the young man. He sat staring at Titian, a look half amused and half perplexed in his dark eyes. The look broke and ran. "Is it so!" he said almost gayly.

Titian nodded grimly. "You come to me."

Giorgione leaned forward. "But I can't spare him," he pleaded. "I can't spare you. The work is late, and the Council hammer at a man! You must wait."

"Just one day," said Titian briefly. "I block in the outlines. It can wait then —a year, six months—I care not."

Giorgione's face regained its look of good-humor. "But you are foolish, Titian, foolish! Paint doges, if you will, paint

popes and dukes—paint gold. But never paint an artist—an artist and a gentleman!"

They laughed merrily and the boat glided on—out into the lagoon and the broad, flooding moonlight.

"Sing something," said Giorgione. He raised the flute to his lips, breathing into it a gay, gentle air. The lute and cithara, from the opposite side, took it up. Presently the tenor voice joined in, carrying the air with sweet, high notes. They fell softly on the ear.

The slender fingers plucking at the cithara faltered. The bosom beneath its white tunic, where a single pansy glowed, trembled with swift breathing, and the red lips parted in a quick sigh.

Titian looked up, smiling reproachfully: "Violante! ah, Violante!" he murmured softly.

She shook her head smilingly. A tear rested on her cheek. "I cannot help it," she said; "it is the music."

"Yes, it is the music," said Titian. His tone was dry—half cynical.

Her husband looked over with faithful eyes and smiled at her.

Only Zarato had not looked up. His eyes followed the dancing leaden water. A flush had come into his sallow cheek. But the moonlight did not reveal it.

Violante glanced at him timidly.

"Come, we will try again," she said. She swept her cithara, and the tenor voice took up the notes. "Faster!" she said. The time quickened. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes shone.

"*Chi boit et ne reboit, ne cais qua boir soit,*" rang out the voice.

"*Qua boir soit—qua boir soit,*" repeated Violante softly.

The duet rose, full and sweet and clear, with passionate undertones. Slowly it died away, calling to itself across the lighted water.

The two men applauded eagerly. "Bella!" murmured Giorgione. "Once more!—Bella!" He clapped his hands.

Again the music rose. Once the eyes of the singers met—a long, slow look. The time quickened a little, and the music deepened.

Titian sat watching them, his head in its velvet cap, thrown back against the cushions, his lips smiling dreamily. His eye strayed over the voluptuous figure at his side—the snowy tunic and the ruby-red bodice and skirt. He knew the figure well, the red-gold hair and wondrous eyes. But a new look had come into them—something tender, almost sweet.

He leaned forward as the music ceased.

"You shall pose for me," he said under his breath. "I want you for the Duke's picture."

She nodded slightly, her bosom rising and falling.

Giorgione leaned forward, smiling.

"What is that?" he asked. His eyes rested tenderly on the flushed face and the full lips of his wife. "What is it you say?"

"I want her for Bacchante," said Titian, "for the Duke's picture." He had not removed his eyes from her face.

Giorgione smiled. Then his face darkened. "My frescos! Oh, my frescos!" he murmured tragically. "But *you* will help, Zarato. You will not go paint for dukes and popes?" The tone was half laughing and half querulous.

The young man roused himself and looked at him questioningly. He drew his

hand across his eyes. "What is it?" he said dreamily. "What is it?" His face flushed. "Help you? Yes, I will help you—if—I can."

## II

"A LITTLE more to the right, please."

Titian's eyes studied the figure before him thoughtfully. His voice murmured half-articulate words, and his glance ran swiftly from the sitter to his canvas.

"That is good." He gave a sigh of satisfaction. "Can you hold that—ten minutes, say!" He had taken up his brush and was painting with swift strokes.

The young man before him smiled a little. The dark, handsome face lighted under it and glowed. "I will do my best." The quiet irony in the tone laughed gently.

Titian smiled back. "I forget that you are of the craft. You have too much of the grand air, Zarato, to belong to us."

"I am indebted to you!" said the

young man politely. He lifted his hand with a courtly gesture, half mocking and half sincere. It dropped easily to the console beside him.

With rapid touches Titian sketched it as it lay. His face glowed with satisfaction, and he worked with eager haste. "Good!—Good!" he murmured under his breath. "It will be great. You will see. . . . You will see." He hummed softly to himself, his glance flashing up and down the tall figure before him, inserting a touch here and a line there, with swift decision.

The warm air of the studio was very quiet. Voices drifted up from the Grand Canal, and now and then the sound of bells.

The young man's eyes looked dreamily before him. He had forgotten the studio and its occupant. He might have been

listening to pleasant words—to the sound of a voice.

"There!" Titian dropped the brush and stepped back. "We have done for to-day." He surveyed the canvas critically.

The young man stepped to his side. He looked earnestly at the daubs and lines of paint that streaked it. A smile crept over his dark face. "You paint like no other," he said quietly.

Titian nodded. "Like no other," he repeated the words with satisfaction. "They will not call it like Palma, this time—nor like Giorgione, nor Signor Somebody Else." He spoke with mild irritation. His eyes travelled over the lines of glowing canvas that covered the walls.

The young man's glance followed them. "No," he assented, "you have outstepped them all. . . . You used them

but to climb on." He moved toward a canvas across the room.

"But this—" he laid his hand lightly on the frame—"this was after Palma?" He turned his eyes with a look of inquiry.

Titian nodded curtly.

"It was the model—partly," he said half grudgingly.

"I know—Violante." Zarato spoke the name softly. He hesitated a moment. "Would she pose for any one—for me, do you think?"

Titian laughed harshly. "Better not, my boy—Better not! When she gets into a brush, it is a lost brush, Zarato—bewitched forever! Look there—and there—and there!" His rapid hand flashed at the canvases.

The young man's eyes followed the gesture. "The result is not so bad," he said gravely.

Titian laughed back. "Not so bad!..." He studied them a minute. "You've no idea how I had to fight to keep her out—And, oh, that hair!" He groaned thoughtfully, looking at the canvases—"Palma's worse!" he chuckled.

The young man started. A thought crossed his face and he looked up. "And Giorgione?" he asked doubtingly.

Titian shook his head grimly. "He married her."

The young man moved a little away. He picked up a small book and mechanically turned the leaves.

The older man eyed him keenly.

"Don't mind me, Zarato." He said it kindly, and laid a hand on the young man's shoulder. "I have no right to say anything against her—except that she's a somewhat fickle woman," he added dryly.

The young man's eyes were fixed on

the page before him. He held it out, pointing to a name scrawled on the margin.

Titian took it in his hands, holding it gently, and turning it so that the light fell on the rich binding. "A treasure!" he said enthusiastically.

The young man nodded. "An Aldine —I saw that. What does the marking mean?" He asked the question almost rudely.

His companion turned the leaves. "It's a bacchanal for the Duke," he said slowly. . . . "I've been looking up Violante's pose.—Here it is." He read the lines in a musical voice.

A heavy frown had come between the handsome eyes watching him. "You'll not paint her like that?"

"I rather think I shall," responded Titian slowly. "She has promised."

"And Giorgione?"

"Giorgione lets her do as she likes. He trusts her—as I do." He laid his hand again on the shoulder near him. "I tell you, man, you're wrong. Believe in her and—leave her," he said significantly.

The shoulder shrugged itself slightly away. The young man picked up his hat from the table near by. He raised it courteously before he dropped it with a little laugh on the dark curls.

"I go to an appointment," he said.

## III

A FACE looked over the balcony railing as the gondola halted at the foot of the steps. It smiled with a look of satisfaction, and the owner, reaching for a rose at her belt, dropped it with a quick touch over the balcony edge.

It fell at the feet of the young man stepping from the gondola, and caused him to bend with a deep flush. It touched his lips lightly as he raised himself and lifted his velvet cap to the face above.

She smiled mockingly. "You are late," she said—"two minutes late!"

"I come!" he replied, springing up the steps. In another minute he was beside her, smiling and flushed, looking down at her with deep, intent gaze.

She made a place for him on the divan. "Sit down," she said.

He seated himself humbly, his eyes studying hers.

She smiled lazily and unfurled her fan, covering her face except the eyes. They regarded him over the fringe of feathers.

"Where have you been?" she demanded.

"With Titian."

"Giorgione wanted you. He did scold so—!" She laughed musically.

Zarato nodded. "I go to him tomorrow."

"Has Titian finished?"

"For the present— He will lay it away."

"I know," she laughed, "—to mellow! . . . How did you like it?"

He hesitated a second. "It was a little rough," he confessed.

"Always!" The laugh rippled sweetly.

"Like a log of wood—or a heap of stones —or a large loaf of bread."

He stirred uneasily. "Do you sit to him often?" he asked.

Her eyes dwelt for a moment on his face. "Not now," she replied.

He returned the look searchingly. "You are going to?"

"Yes," she assented.

He still held her eyes. "I don't like it," he said slowly.

The ghost of a smile came into her face. Her eyes danced in the shadow of it. "No?" she said quietly.

"No!"

She waited, looking down and plucking at the silken fringe of her bodice. "Why?" she asked after a time.

He made no reply.

She glanced up at him. He was looking away from her, across the gay canal.

His face had a gentle, preoccupied look, and his lip trembled.

Her glance fell. "Why not?" she repeated softly.

He looked down at her and his face flushed. "I don't know," he said. He bent toward her and took the fan from her fingers.

She yielded it with half reluctance, her eyes mocking him and her lips alluring.

He smiled back at her, shaking his head slightly and unfurling the fan. He had regained his self-possession. He moved the fan gently, stirring the red-gold hair and fluttering the silken fringe on her bodice. It rose and fell swiftly, moved in the soft current of air. His eyes studied her face. "Will you sit for me some day?" he said.

She nodded without speaking. The breath came swiftly between the red lips

and the eyes were turned away. They rested on the façade of a tall building opposite, where a flock of doves, billing and cooing in the warm air, strutted and preened themselves. Their plump and iridescent breasts shone in the sun.

Her hand reached for the cithara at her side. "Shall I sing you their song?" she said, "The Birds of Venus."

He smiled indulgently. Her voice crooned the words.

"Sing!" she said imperiously. He joined in, following her mood with ready ease.

There was silence between them when the song was done. She sat with her eyes half closed, looking down at the white hands in her lap.

He lifted one of them gently, his eyes on her face. She did not stir or look up. He raised it slowly to his lips.

The warm breath stirred a smile on her face. She glanced at him from under falling lids.

He dropped the hand and stood up with a half cry.

"I must go—Violante—I must—go!" He groped to where the doorway opened, cool and dark, behind them, "I must go," he repeated vaguely.

She rose and came to him slowly. "You must go," she said softly.

They passed into the dark, open doorway.

Below, in the hot sun, the gondola rocked at the foot of the stairs.

# IV

THE noon-bell in the southern turret of the Fondaco chimed softly. A painter at work on the façade near by looked up inquiringly at the sun. He smiled absently to himself and, dropping his brushes, descended lightly from the scaffolding to the ground. He walked away a few steps —as far as the ground permitted—and turned to look at the work above.

"Not so bad," he murmured softly, "—not so bad . . . and better from the water." He glanced at the canal below. A white hand from a passing gondola waved to him and motioned approvingly toward the colors of the great wall.

"Bravo, Tiziano!" called some one from another craft. The canal took up the cry. "Bravo, bravo! Bravo,—Tiziano!"

Titian raised his painter's cap and returned the salute. He stood with one foot on the parapet, looking down and smiling with easy grace, at the pleasure-loving crowd below. A man came in sight around the corner of the Fondaco, walking slowly and looking up at the picture as he came.

"Well?" Titian glanced at him keenly.

"Great!" responded Giorgione heartily. "The Judith bears the light well, and when the scaffolding is down it will be better yet. . . . Venice will be proud!" He laid his hand affectionately on the other's shoulder and motioned toward the throng of boats that had halted below, gazing at the glowing wall.

"To-day Titian—to-morrow another!" said Titian a little bitterly.

"Why care?" responded Giorgione. "Some one to-day told me that my

Judith, on the south wall here, surpasses all my other work together." He laughed cordially.

Titian looked at him keenly. His face had flushed a little under the compliment. "It is like you not to care," he said affectionately.

"Care! Why should I care—so that the work is done?" His eyes rested lovingly on the façade. "It is marvellous—that trick of light," he said wonderingly. . . . "You must teach it to me."

Titian laughed under his breath. "I learned it from you."

Giorgione shook his head. "Not from me . . ." he replied doubtingly. "If you learned it from me, others would learn from me." He stood, looking up, lost in thought.

"Where is Zarato?" asked Titian abruptly.

Giorgione started vaguely. A flush

came into his face. "He stopped work—an hour ago," he said.

Titian's eyes were on his face.

The open friendliness had vanished. It was turned to him with a look of trouble. "Had you thought, Cevelli—" His speech hesitated and broke off. He was looking down at the dark water.

Titian answered the unspoken question. "Yes, I had thought," he said. His voice was very quiet.

His companion looked up quickly. "He is with her now, it may be. . . . I told them that I should not go home at the noon-bell." He looked about him slowly—at the clear sky and at the moving throng of boats below—

"I am going home." He spoke the words with dull emphasis.

Titian turned and held out his hand. "The gods be with you, friend!"

Giorgione gripped it for a moment. Tears waited behind the eyes and clouded the look of trust. "I could bear it if—if Zarato was not my friend," he said as he turned away.

"Keep faith while you may," said Titian, following him a step. "He who distrusts a friend lends thunderbolts to the gods," he quoted softly.

"Remind him that he is to sit for me this afternoon," he called more lightly, as the other moved away.

"I will remember," said Giorgione soberly. The next moment he had disappeared in the maze of buildings.

Titian, looking after him, shook his head slowly. He turned and gathered up some tools from a bench near by. . . . The look in his friend's eyes haunted him.

## V

IT still haunted him as he laid out brushes and colors in his studio for the appointed sitting with Zarato.

He brought the canvas from the wall and placed it on the easel and stood back, examining it critically. His face lighted and he hummed softly, gazing at the rough outline. . . . Slowly, in the smudge of the vague face, gleaming eyes formed themselves—Giorgione's eyes! They looked out at him, pathetic and fierce.

With an exclamation of disgust he threw down the brush. He looked about him for his cap, and found it at last—on the back of his head. He settled it more firmly in place. "There will be time," he muttered. "I shall be back in time." With a swift glance about him he was

gone from the room, and on the way to Giorgione's studio.

As he opened the door he saw Giorgione's great figure huddled together against the eastern window. Bars of light fell across it and danced on the floor. Titian crossed the studio quickly and touched the bent shoulder.

The eyes that looked up were those that had called him. Giorgione's eyes—a fierce, pathetic light in their depths. They gazed at him stupidly. "What is it?" asked the man. He spoke thickly and half rose, gazing curiously about the room. He ran a hand across his forehead and looked at Titian vaguely. "What is it?" he repeated.

Titian fell back a step. "That's what I came to find out," he said frankly. He was more startled than he cared to show.

"What has happened, Giorgione?" His tone was gentle, as if speaking to a child, and he took him by the shoulder to lead him to a seat.

For a moment the man resisted. Then he let himself be led, passively, and sank back in the chair with a hoarse sigh. He looked about the studio as if seeking something—and afraid of it. "She's gone!" he whispered.

Titian started. "No!"

Giorgione laughed harshly. "Fled as a bird," he said gayly, "a bird that was snared." He hummed a few bars of the song and stopped, his gaze fixed on vacancy. A great shudder broke through him, and he buried his face in his hands. There was no movement but the heave of his shoulders, and no sound. The light upon the floor danced in the stillness.

Titian's eyes rested on it, perplexed.

He crossed the room swiftly and touched a bell. He gave an order and waited with his hand on his friend's shoulder till the servant returned.

"Drink this," he said firmly, bending over him. He was holding a long, slender glass to his lips.

The man quaffed it—slowly at first, then eagerly. "Yes, that is good!" he said as he drained the glass. "I tremble here." He laid his hand on his heart. "And my hand is strange." He smiled—a wan, wintry smile—and looked at his friend with searching eyes.

"Where have they gone?" he demanded.

Titian shook his head. "How should I know?"

"He said he was going to you."

"Zarato?" Titian started. "For the portrait— He will be there!"

Giorgione broke into a harsh laugh. "No portrait for Zarato!" He said it exultantly.

"What do you mean!"

"He bears a beauty mark." He laughed again.

"You did not——?"

Giorgione glanced cunningly about the studio. His big face worked and his eyes were flushed. He laid his hand on his lips.

"Hush!" he said. "It is a secret—I—she—branded him with this." A piece of heavy iron lay on the sill—the wood near it blackened and charred. He took it up fondly.

"Look!" He pointed to the fire-worn end.

Titian shrank back in horror. "You are mad!" he said.

Giorgione shook his head sadly. "I wish I were mad . . . my eyes have

seen too much." He rubbed his hand across them vaguely.

"Sleep—" he murmured. "A little sleep." The potion was beginning to take effect.

Titian laid him on the couch near by and hurried from the studio.

"Home!" he said to the white-robed gondolier who looked back for orders. "Home! Row for life!"

A sense of vague horror haunted him. He dared not think what tragedy might be enacting. A man of Zarato's proud spirit— "Faster!" he called to the laboring gondolier, and the boat shot under the awning.

With a sigh of relief he closed the door of his studio behind him. . . . On the couch across the room, his cap fallen to the floor and his arms hanging at his sides, lay the young man asleep. Titian

moved forward, scanning eagerly the dark, handsome face. Deep shadows lay under the closed lids, and a look of scornful suffering touched the lines of the mouth. Slowly his eyes traversed the figure. He gave a start and bent closer, his eyes peering forward. . . . The left hand trailing on the floor was gloved, but above the low wrist a faint line shot up—a blotch on the firm flesh.

With an exclamation of horror he dropped to his knees and lifted the hand.

It rested limply in his grasp.

Slowly the eyes opened and looked out at him. A faint flush overspread the young man's face. He withdrew the hand and sat up. "I came to tell you the portrait—must wait," he said apologetically, "I fell asleep." He picked up his cap from the floor and smoothed its ruffled surface. "I must go now." He looked

awkwardly at his friend and got to his feet.

"Zarato," said Titian sternly. "Where is she?"

He shook his head. "I don't know," slowly.

"You don't know! She has left home——"

"But not with me."

The two men stood staring at each other.

There was a sound of steps in the hall and the door swung open. It was a group of Venetian boatmen, bearing in their midst a wet, sagging form. The red-gold hair trailed heavily. They moved stolidly across the room and laid their burden on the low bench. The oldest of them straightened his back and looked apologetically at the wet marks on the shining floor.

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"He said to bring her here, Signor." He motioned clumsily toward the wet figure. "He said so."

"Who said it?" said Titian harshly.

"Signor— The Signor—Giorgione. . . . We took her there. He would not let us in. He stood at the window. He was laughing. He said to bring her here," ended the old man stolidly. "She is long dead." He bent to pick up the heavy litter. The group shuffled from the room.

Slowly the young man crossed to the bench. He knelt by the motionless figure and, drawing the glove from his hand, laid it on the breast that shone in the wet folds.

"I swear, before God—" he said . . . "before God!" He swayed heavily and fell forward.

The artist sprang to his side. As he touched him, his eye fell on the ungloved

hand. . . . Shuddering, he reached over and lifted the glove from the wet breast. He drew it over the hand, covering it from sight.

# VI

"YOU must go!" said Titian sternly.

The young man looked at him dully, almost appealingly. He shook his head. "I have work to do."

Titian lifted an impatient hand. "The people will not permit it—I tell you!" He spoke harshly. "Giorgione is their idol. It has been hard to keep them—this one week! Only my promise that you go at once holds them."

The young man smiled, a little cynically. "Do you think I fear death—I crave it!" His arms fell at his sides.

His companion looked at him intently. "What is your plan?" he asked shortly.

"Giorgione—" The voice was tense. "He shall pay—to the uttermost!"

"For that?" Titian made a motion toward the gloved hand.

The young man raised it with a scornful gesture.

"For that"—he spoke sternly—"I would not touch the dog. It is for her!" His voice dropped.

Titian waited a moment. "What would you do?" he asked in a low voice.

The young man stirred. "I care not. He must suffer—as she suffered," he added with slow significance.

"Would that content you? Would you go away—and not return?"

"I would go—yes."

Titian waited, his eyes on the gloved hand. "You can go," he said at last, "the Lord has avenged her."

The young man leaned forward. His breath came sharply. "What do you mean?"

"That she is avenged," said Titian slowly. "Giorgione cannot live the year. Go away. Leave him to die in peace."

"I did not ask for peace," said the young man grimly.

Titian turned on him fiercely. "His heart breaks. He dies drop by drop!"

The young man smiled.

Titian watched him closely. "You need not fear his not suffering," he said significantly. "Go watch through his window, or by a crack in the door."—He waited a breath. "The man is mad!"

The young man started sharply.

"Mad!" repeated Titian.

Zarato turned on him a look of horror and exultation. "Mad!" he repeated softly. The gloved hand trembled.

A look of relief stole into Titian's face. "Does that satisfy you?" he asked quietly. "Will you go?"

"Yes, I will go." The young man rose. He moved toward the door. "Mad!" he whispered softly.

"Wait," said Titian. He sprang before him. "Not by daylight—you would be murdered in the open street! You must wait till night. . . . I shall row you, myself, out from the city. It is arranged. A boat waits for you."

The young man looked at him gratefully. "You take this risk for me?" he said humbly.

"For you and Giorgione and for—her."

They sat silent.

"He will never paint again," said the young man, looking up quickly with the thought.

Titian shook his head. "Never again," he said slowly.

The young man looked at him. "There are a dozen pictures begun," he said, "a dozen and more."

"Yes."

"Who will finish them?"

"Who can tell?" The painter's face had clouded.

"Shall you?"

Titian returned the suspicious gaze frankly. "It is not likely," he said. "He will not speak to me or see me. He says I am false to him—I harbor you."

The young man's gaze fell. "I will go," he said humbly. He shivered a little.

"And not return till I send for you."

"I will not return—till you send for me!"

## VII

VENICE laughed in the sunshine. Gay-colored boats flitted here and there on the Grand Canal, and overhead the birds of Venus sailed in the warm air.

A richly equipped gondola, coming down the canal, made its way among the moving boats. Its occupant, a dark, handsome man, sitting alone among the crimson cushions, looked out on the hurrying scene with watchful eyes. Other eyes from passing gondolas returned the glance with curious, smiling gaze and drifted past. No one challenged him and none remembered. Two years is overlong for laughing Venice to hold a grudge or to remember a man—when the waters close over him. . . . Slowly the boat drifted on, and the dark eyes of the man feasted on the flow and change of

color. . . . "Bride of the Sea," he murmured as the boat swept on. "Bride of the Sea—There is none like thee in beauty or power!" His eyes, rapt with the vision, grew misty. He raised an impatient hand to them, and let it fall again to his knee. It rested there, strong and supple. The seal of a massive ring broke its whiteness. The other hand, incased in a rich glove, rested on the edge of the gondola. The man's eyes sought it for a moment and turned away to the gay scene.

With a skilful turn the boat had come to rest at the foot of a flight of stairs leading to a richly carved doorway. The young man leaped out and ran up the steps. The great silent door swung open to his touch, and he disappeared within.

Titian, standing by his easel, looked up quickly. "You are come!" He sprang forward, holding out his hands.

The young man took them, looking into the welcoming eyes. "I am come," he said slowly.

"Why did you send for me?" he asked after a pause. His eyes sought the glowing walls of color, with curious, eager glance.

"Nothing there!" The painter shook his head with a wistful smile. "I have not done a stroke since that last night—the night I rowed you out to the lagoon."

"Why not?" They were seated by a window; the tide of life drifted below.

Titian shook his head again. "I was broken at first—too strained and weak. My fingers would not follow my thoughts." He glanced down at them ruefully. "And then—" His voice changed. "Then they came for me to finish his pictures. . . . There has been no time."

"Did he want you to do it?" asked the other in a low voice.

Titian's gaze returned the question. "I shall never know— He would not see me—to the last. He never spoke. . . . When he was gone they came for me. I did the work and asked no questions—for friendship's sake." He sighed gently and his glance fell on the moving, changing crowd below.

"His name is water," he said slowly. "Ask for the fame of Giorgione— They will name you—Titian!" He laughed bitterly.

The young man's smile had little mirth in it. "We are all like that. . . ." He turned to him sharply: "Why did you want me?"

The painter roused himself. "To sit for me"—with a swift look. "I am hunted! I cannot wipe away your face—

as it looked that night. I paint nothing. . . . Perhaps when you are done in oil I shall rest easy." He laughed shortly and rose to his feet.

The young man rose also with a courteous gesture of the supple hand. "I am at your service, Signor Cevelli, now and always."

Titian's eyes swept the graceful figure. "I must begin at once." He turned away to an easel.

"There was a picture begun, was there not?" asked the young man. He had not moved from his place.

Titian looked up swiftly. "Yes," he said. "Yes."

"Why not finish that?"

The painter waited an awkward moment. He crossed the room and fumbled among the canvases. Then he brought it and placed it on the easel, looking at

it. . . . Slowly the look changed to one of pride, and his hand reached out for a brush.

The young man moved to his side. They looked at it in silence.

"You will not do better." The young man spoke with decision. "Best finish it as it stands—I am ready." He moved to his place by the console, dropping his hand upon it and standing at ease.

Titian looked at him doubtfully. "We shall change the length and perhaps the pose," he said thoughtfully.

"Why?" The question came sharply.

The painter colored under it. "I had planned—to make much of the—hands." He hesitated between the words. "The change will be simple," he added hastily.

"Would you mind painting me as I am?" There was a note of insistence behind the words.

Titian's eyes leaped at the question. They scanned the figure before him with quick, gleaming lights.

The young man read their depths. "Go on," he said coolly. "When my feelings are hurt I will tell you."

The painter took up his brushes, working with swift haste. Fingers and brush and thumb flew across the canvas. Splotches of color were daubed on and rubbed carelessly in and removed with infinite pains. Over the picture crept a glow of living color and of light.

At last the brush dropped. "I can do no more—to-day," he said slowly. His eyes dwelt on the picture lovingly.

The young man came across and joined him, looking down at the glowing canvas. His lips curved in a sweet smile.

"You thought I was ashamed of it?" The gloved hand lifted itself slightly.

"I would not part with it—not for all the gold of Venice!"

The painter's eyes were on it, doubtingly. "But you wear it gloved," he stammered.

"It is not for the world to see," murmured the young man quietly. "It is our secret—hers and mine. It was her last touch on my hand."

Titian's eyes stared at him.

"You did not know?" The lips smiled at him. "It was her hand that did it." He touched the glove lightly. "Giorgione stood over her—and guided it. . . ." His voice ceased with a catch.

Titian's eyes were full of tears. "Poor Violante!" he murmured. "Poor child!"

The other nodded slightly. "It has pledged us forever—forever." He repeated the words in low, musical exultation. The locket suspended from its slen-

der chain amid the folds of his cloak, swung forward as he moved. A hand stayed it—the gloved hand.

There was silence between them. Voices from the canal floated up, laughter-laden. The June sunshine flooded in.

Titian roused himself with a sigh. "It shall be called 'The Portrait of a Gentleman,'" he said. He laid his hand with swift affection on the arm beside him.

The young man smiled back. His hand closed firmly over the one on his arm. "Call it 'The Man With the Glove,'" he said quietly. "It is the open secret that remains unguessed."

# THE LOST MONOGRAM

# The Lost Monogram

## I

THE woman seated in the light of the low, arched window was absorbed in the piece of linen stretched on a frame before her. As her fingers hovered over the brilliant surface, her eyes glowed with a look of satisfaction and lighted the face, making it almost handsome. It was a round, smooth face, untouched by wrinkles, with light-blue eyes—very near the surface—and thin, curved lips.

She leaned back in her chair to survey her work, and her lips took on a deeper curve. Then they parted slightly. Her face, with a look of listening, turned toward the door.

The young man who entered nodded

carelessly as he threw back the blue-gray cloak that hung about his shoulders and advanced into the room.

She regarded the action coldly. "I have been waiting, Albrecht." She spoke the words slowly. "Where have you been?"

"I see." He untied the silken strings of the cloak and tossed it from him. "I met Pirkheimer—we got to talking."

The thin lips closed significantly. She made no comment.

The young man crossed the room and knelt before a stack of canvases by the wall, turning them one by one to the light. His full lips puckered in a half whistle, and his eyes had a dreamy look.

The woman had returned to her work, drawing in the threads with swift touch.

As the man rose to his feet her eyes

flashed a look at the canvas in his hand. They fell again on her work, and her face ignored him.

He placed the canvas on an easel and stood back to survey it. His lips whistled softly. He rummaged again for brushes and palette, and mixed one or two colors on the edge of the palette. A look of deep happiness filled his absorbed face.

She lifted a pair of scissors and snipped a thread with decisive click. "Are you going on with the portrait?" she asked. The tone was clear and even, and held no trace of resentment.

He looked up absently. "Not to-day," he said. "Not to-day." His gaze returned to the easel.

The thin lips drew to a line. They did not speak. She took off her thimble and laid it in its velvet sheath. She gathered up the scattered skeins of linen and silk,

straightening each with a little pull, and laid them in the case. She stabbed a needle into the tiny cushion and dropped the scissors into their pocket. Then she rose deliberately, her chair scraping the polished boards as she pushed it back from the frame.

He looked up, a half frown between the unseeing eyes.

She lifted the embroidery-frame from its rest and turned toward the door. "I have other work to do if I am not to pose for you," she said quietly.

He made no reply.

Half-way to the door she paused, looking back. "Herr Mündler was here while you were out. We owe him twenty-five guldens. It was due the fifth." She spoke the words crisply. Her face gave no sign of emotion.

He nodded indifferently. "I know. I

shall see him." The soft whistle was resumed.

"There is a note from the Rath, refusing you the pension again." She drew a paper from the work-box in her hand and held it toward him.

He turned half about in his chair. "Don't worry, Agnes," he said. The tone was pleading. He did not look at the paper or offer to take it. His eyes returned to the easel. A gentle light filled them.

She dropped the paper into the box, a smile on her lips, and moved toward the easel. She stood for a moment, looking from the pictured face of the Christ to the glowing face above it. Then she turned again to the door. "It's very convenient to be your own model," she said with a laugh. The door clicked behind her.

He sat motionless, the grave, earnest eyes looking into the eyes of the picture. Now and then he stirred vaguely. But he did not lift his hand or touch the brushes beside it. Gazing at each other, in the fading light of the low window, the two faces were curiously alike. There was the same delicate modelling of lines, the same breadth between the eyes, the long, flowing locks, the full, sensitive lips, and in the eyes the same look of deep melancholy—touched with a subtle, changing, human smile that drew the beholder. It disarmed criticism and provoked it. Except for the halo of mocking and piercing thorns, the living face might have been the pictured one below it. The look of suffering in one was shadowed in the other.

There was a light tap at the door and it flew open.

The painter looked up quickly. The tense, earnest gaze broke into a sunny smile. "Pirkheimer!" He sprang to his feet. "What now?"

The other man came leisurely across the room, his eyes on the easel. He nodded toward it approvingly.

"Wanted to see it," he said. His eyes studied the picture. "I got to thinking it over after you left me—I was afraid you might touch it up and spoil it—I want it just as it is." His eyes sought his companion's face.

The painter shook his head. "I don't know—not yet—you must leave it with me. It's yours. You shall have it—when it's done."

"It's done now," said the other brusquely. "Here—sign." He picked up a brush, and, dipping it into a soft color on the palette, handed it to the painter.

He took it doubtfully between his fingers, his eyes on the face. Slowly his hand moved toward the canvas. It traced rapidly, below the flowing locks, a huge, uncouth A; then, more slowly, within the sprawling legs of the A, a shadowy D; and finally, at the top, above them both, in tiny figures, a date—1503. The brush dropped from his fingers, and he stepped back with a little sigh.

His companion reached out his hand. "That's all right," he said. "I'll take it."

The artist interposed a hand. "Not yet," he said.

"It's mine," replied the other. "You said it."

"Yes, I said it—not yet."

The other yielded with a satisfied smile. His hand strayed to the purse hanging at his side. "What's to pay? Tell me."

The artist shook his head. "I would not sell it—not even to you," he said. His eyes were on the canvas.

"But it's mine!"

"It's yours—for friendship's sake."

The young man nodded contentedly. Then a thought struck across his face. "You'll tell Agnes that?" he said quickly.

"Ay, I'll tell Agnes—that it's yours. But not what you paid for it," added the painter thoughtfully.

"No, no, don't tell her that." The young man spoke quickly. His tone was half jesting, half earnest. He stood looking at the two faces, glancing from one to the other with a look of baffled resentment. "A living shame!" he muttered under his breath.

The artist looked up quickly. "What?"

"Nothing." The young man moved vaguely about the room. "I wish to God,

Dürer, you had a free hand!" he broke out.

The artist glanced inquiry. He held up his hand, moving the supple fingers with a little gesture of pride. "Isn't it?" he demanded, smiling.

The young man shook his head. His round face retained its look of dissent. "Marriage—for a man like you! Two hundred florins—for dowry!" He laughed scornfully.

His companion's face flushed. A swift look came into the eyes.

The other held out a deprecating hand. "I didn't mean it," he said. "Don't be angry."

The flush faded. The artist turned to the easel, taking up a brush, as if to seek in work a vent for his disturbed thought.

"You'll spoil it!" said Pirkheimer quickly.

"I shall finish it," replied Dürer, without looking up.

The other moved restlessly about. "Well . . . I must go. Good-by, Dürer." He came and stood by the easel, holding out his hand.

The artist rose, the warm smile on his lips bathing his face. "Good-by, my friend." He held out his hand frankly.

Pirkheimer caught it in his. "We're friends?" he said.

"Always."

"And you will never want—if I can help you."

"Never!" The tone was hearty and proud.

Pirkheimer turned away with a look of contentment. "I shall hold you to it," he said. "It is a promise."

"I shall hold you to it," laughed Dürer.

When the door had closed, he stood looking down at the picture. He moved once or twice across the room. Then he stopped before a little brazier, looking at it hesitatingly. He bent over and lighted the coals in the basin. He blew them with a tiny bellows till they glowed. Then he placed a pan above them and threw into it lumps of brownish stuff. When the mixture was melted, he carried it across to the easel and dipped a large brush into it thoughtfully. He drew it across the canvas. The track behind it glowed and deepened in the dim light. Slowly the picture mellowed under it. A look of sweet satisfaction hovered about the artist's lips as he worked. The liquid in the pan lessened and his brush moved more slowly. The mixture had deepened in tint and thickened. Wherever the brush rested a deep, luminous color

sprang to meet it. It moved swiftly across the monogram—and paused. The artist peered forward uncertainly. The letters lay erased in the dim light. With another stroke of the brush—and another—they were gone forever.

The smile of satisfaction deepened on his lips. It was not conceit, nor humility, nor pride. One could not have named the sweetness that hovered in it—hauntingly.

He laid down the brush with a quick breath and sat gazing at the picture. It returned the gentle, inevitable look. He raised a finger to the portrait, speaking softly. "It is Albrecht Dürer—his work," he said under his breath. "None but a fool can mistake it. It shall speak for him forever."

## II

FOR a quarter of a century the picture had rested, face to the wall, on the floor of the small, dark studio. Pirkheimer had demanded his treasure—sometimes with jests, and sometimes with threats. But the picture had remained unmoved against the wall.

Journeys to Italy and to the Netherlands had intervened. Pirkheimer's velvet purse had been dipped into again and again. Commissions without number had been executed for him—rings and stones and tapestries, carvings and stag-antlers, and cups and silks and velvet—till the Pirkheimer mansion glowed with color from the South and delicate workmanship from the North. Other pictures from Dürer's brush adorned its walls—grotesque monks and gentle Vir-

gins. But the Face bided its time against the wall.

To-day—for the first time in twenty-five years—the Face of the Christ was turned to the light. The hand that drew it from its place had not the supple fingers of the painter. Those fingers, stiffened and white, lay upon a quiet breast—outside the city wall.

The funeral cortège had trotted briskly back, and Agnes Dürer had come directly to the studio, with its low, arched window, to take account of her possessions. It was all hers—the money the artist had toiled to leave her, the work that had shortened life, and the thousand Rhenish guldens in the hands of the most worthy Rath; the pictures and copperplates, the books he had written and the quaint curios he had loved—they were all hers, except, perhaps, the

copperplates for Andreas. Her level glance swept them as she crossed to the canvas against the wall and lifted it to a place on the easel. She had often begged him to sell the picture. It was large and would bring a good price. Her eyes surveyed it with satisfaction. A look of dismay crossed the smooth face. She leaned forward and searched the picture eagerly. The dismay deepened to anger. He had neglected to sign it! She knew well the value of the tiny monogram that marked the canvases about her. A sound clicked in her throat. She reached out her white hand to a brush on the bench beside her. There would be no wrong done. It was Albrecht's work—his best work. Her eyes studied the modelling of the delicate, strong face—the Christ face—Albrecht's face—at thirty-three. . . . Had he looked like that? She stared at it vaguely. She

moved away, looking about her for a bit of color. She found it and came again to the easel. She reached out her hand for the brush. A slip of paper tucked beneath the canvas caught her eye. She drew it out slowly, unfolding it with curious fingers. "This picture of the Christ is the sole property of my dear and honored friend, the Herr Willibald Pirkheimer. I have given it to him and his heirs to have and to hold forever. Signed by me, this day, June 8, 1503, in my home in Nürnberg, 15 Zisselstrasse, Albrecht Dürer."

She crushed the paper in firm fingers. A door had opened behind her. The discreet servant, in mourning garments, with downcast, reddened eyes, waited. "His Highness the Herr Pirkheimer is below, my lady."

For a moment she hesitated. Then

her fingers opened on the bit of paper. It fluttered to the table and lay full in sight. She looked at it with her thin smile. "Ask Herr Pirkheimer to ascend to the studio. I shall receive him here," she said.

He entered facing the easel. With an exclamation he sprang forward. He laid a hand on the canvas. The small eyes blinked at her.

She returned the look coldly.

"It is mine!" he said.

She inclined her head, with a stately gesture, to the open paper on the table beside her.

He seized it in trembling fingers. He shook it toward her. "It is mine. You see—it is mine!"

"It is yours, Herr Pirkheimer." She spoke with level coolness. "I had read the paper."

With a grunt of satisfaction, he turned again to the canvas. A smothered oath broke from his lips. He leaned forward, incredulous. His round eyes, bulging and blue, searched every corner. They fell on the wet brush and bit of color. He turned on her fiercely. "Jezebel!" he hissed, "you have painted it out. I saw him sign it—years ago—twenty-five years!"

She smiled serenely. "It may have been some other one," she said sweetly. Her glance took in the scattered canvases.

He shook his head savagely. "I will have no other," he shouted; "I should know it in a thousand!"

"Very well." Her voice was as tranquil as her face. "Shall I have it sent to the house of the honored Herr Pirkheimer?"

He glared at her. "I take it with me," he said. "I do not trust it out of sight."

She bowed in acquiescence. Standing in her widow's garments, with downcast eyes and gentle resignation, she waited his withdrawal.

He eyed her curiously. The years had touched her lightly. There were the same plump features, the same surface eyes, and light, abundant bands of hair. He heaved a round sigh. He thought of the worn face outside the city wall. He gathered the canvas under his arm, glaring about the low room. "There was a pair of antlers," he muttered. "They might go in my collection. You will want to sell them."

The downcast eyes did not leave the floor. "They are sold," she said, "to Herr Umstätter." A little smile played about the thin lips.

"Sold! Already!" The round eyes bulged at her. "My God!" he shouted fiercely, "you would sell his very soul, if he had left it where you could!"

She raised the blue eyes and regarded him calmly. "The estate is without condition," she said.

He groaned as he backed toward the door. The canvas was hugged under his arm. At the door he paused, looking back over the room. His small eyes winked fast, and the loose mouth trembled.

"He was a great man, Agnes," he said gently. "We must keep it clean—the name of Dürer."

She looked up with a little gesture of dismissal. "It is I who bear the name," she said coldly.

When he was gone she glanced about the room. She went over to a pile of

canvases and turned them rapidly to the light. Each one that bore the significant monogram she set aside with a look of possession. She came at last to the one she was searching. It was a small canvas —a Sodom and Gomorrah. She studied the details slowly. It was not signed. She gave a little breath of satisfaction, and took up the brush from the bench. She remembered well the day Albrecht brought it home, and his childish delight in it. It was one of Joachim Patenir's. Albrecht had given a Christ head of his own in exchange for it. The brush in her fingers trembled a little. It inserted the wide-spreading A beneath Lot's flying legs, and overtraced it with a delicate D. She paused a moment in thought. Then she raised her head and painted in, with swift, decisive strokes, high up in one corner of the picture, a date. It

was a safe date—1511—the year he painted his Holy Trinity. There would be no one to question it.

She sat back, looking her satisfaction.

Seventy-five guldens to account. It atoned a little for the loss of the Christ.

## III

THE large drawing-room was vacant. The blinds had been drawn to shut out the glare, and a soft coolness filled the room. In the dim light of half-opened shutters the massive furniture loomed large and dark, and from the wall huge paintings looked down mistily. Gilt frames gleamed vaguely in the cool gloom. Above the fireplace hung a large canvas, and out of its depths sombre, waiting eyes looked down upon the vacant room.

The door opened. An old woman had entered. She held in her hand a stout cane. She walked stiffly across to the window and threw back a shutter. The window opened into the soft greenness of a Munich garden. She stood for a minute looking into it. Then she came over to the fireplace and looked up to

the pictured face. Her head nodded slowly.

"It must be," she muttered, "it must be. No one else could have done it. But four hundred years!"—she sighed softly. "Who can tell?"

Her glance wandered with a dissatisfied air to the other canvases. "I would give them all—all of them—twice over—to know—" She spoke under her breath as she hobbled stiffly to a huge chair.

The door swung softly back and forth behind a young girl who had entered. She came in lightly, looking down at a packet of papers in her hand.

The old woman started forward.

"What have ye found?" she demanded. She was leaning on the stout cane. She peered out of her cavernous eyes.

The girl crossed to the window and seated herself in the green light. Shadows of a climbing vine fell on her hair and shoulders as she bent over the papers in her hand. She opened one of them and ran her eye over it before she spoke.

"They were in the north room," she said slowly. "In the big *escritoire*—that big, clumsy one— I've looked there before, but I never found them. I've been trying all day to make them out."

"What are they?" demanded the old woman.

"Papers, grandmamma," returned the girl absently; "letters and a sort of journal." Her eyes were on the closely written page.

"Read it," said the old woman sharply.

"I can't read it, grandmamma." She shook back the soft curls with a little

sigh. "It's queer and old, and funny—some of the words. And the writing is blurred and yellow. Look." She held up the open sheet.

The keen old eyes darted at it. "Work on it," she said brusquely.

"I have, grandmamma."

"Well—what did ye find?"

"It's a man—Will—Willi"—she turned to the bottom of the last page—"Willibald! That's it." She laughed softly. "Willibald Pirkheimer. Who was he?" she asked.

"One of your ancestors." The old mouth waited grimly.

"One of mamma's?"

"Your father's."

"He must have been a nice man," said the girl slowly. "But some of it is rather—queer."

The old woman leaned forward with

a quick gesture. She straightened herself. "Nonsense!" she muttered. "Read it," she said aloud.

"This is written to Albrecht Dürer," said the girl, studying it, "in Italy."

The old woman reached out a knotted hand. "Give it to me," she said.

The girl came across and laid it in her hand. The knotted fingers smoothed it. The old eyes were on the picture above the mantel. "Will it tell?" she muttered.

"There are others, grandmamma." The girl held up the packet in her hand.

"What have ye made out?" The old hand closed upon them.

"He was Dürer's friend," said the girl. "There are letters to him—five or six. And he tells about a picture—in the journal—a picture Albrecht Dürer gave to him." She glanced down at the wrinkled, working face. "It was unsigned,

grandmamma—and it was the head of the Saviour."

The old woman's throat moved loosely. Her hands grasped the stout cane.

With a half sigh, she rose to her feet and tottered across the room. "Fool—fool—" she muttered, looking up to the mystical, waiting face. "To leave no mark—no sign—but that!" She shook the yellow papers in her hand.

A question shot into the old eyes. She held out the papers.

"What was it dated, Marie?—that place in the journal—look and see."

The girl took the papers and moved again to the window. She opened one and smoothed it thoughtfully, running her eye along the page. She shook her head slowly. "There is no date, grandmamma," she said. "But it must be after Dürer's death. He speaks of

Frau Dürer"—a smile shaded her lips—"he doesn't like her very well, I think. When did Dürer die, grandmamma?" She looked up from the paper.

"April 6, 1528," said the old woman promptly.

The girl's eyes grew round and misty. "Four hundred years ago—almost," she murmured softly. She looked down, a little awed, at the paper in her hand.

"It is very old," she said.

The old woman nodded sharply. Her eyes were on the papers. "Take good care of them," she croaked; "they may tell it to us yet."

She straightened her bent figure and glanced toward the door.

A wooden butler was bowing himself to the floor. "The Herr Professor Doctor Polonius Holtzenschuer," he announced grandly.

A dapper young man with trim mus-

taches and spotless boots advanced into the room.

The girl by the window swayed a breath. The clear color had mounted in her cheek.

The old woman waited, immovable. Her hands were clasped above the stout cane and her bead-like eyes surveyed the advancing figure.

At two yards' distance it paused. The heels came together with a swift click. He bowed in military salute.

The old woman achieved a stiff courtesy and waited. The dim eyes peered at him shrewdly.

"I have the honor to pay my respects to the Baroness von Herkomer," said the young man, with deep politeness.

The baroness assented gruffly. She seated herself on a large divan, facing the picture, and motioned with her knotted hand to the seat beside her.

The young man accepted it deferentially. His eyes were on a bowed head, framed in shadows and leaves across the room.

"I trust Fräulein Marie is well?" he said promptly.

"Marie——"

The girl started vaguely.

"Come and greet the Herr Doctor Holtzenschuer."

She rose lightly from her place and came across the room. A soft curl, blown by the wind, drifted across her flushes as she came.

The young man sprang to his feet. His heels clicked again as he bent low before her.

She descended in a shy courtesy and glanced inquiringly at her grandmother.

The old woman nodded curtly. "Go on with your papers," she said.

The girl turned again to the green window. Her head bowed itself above the papers.

The young man's eyes followed them. He turned to the old woman beside him. "Is it something about—the picture?" he asked.

She nodded sharply. "Private papers of Willibald Pirkheimer," she said, "ancestor of the von Herkomers—sixteenth century. He was a friend of Dürer's." Her lips closed crisply on the words.

He looked at her, a smile under the trim mustaches. "You hope they will furnish a clew?" he asked tolerantly.

She made no reply. Her wrinkled face was raised to the picture.

"You have one Dürer." He motioned toward a small canvas. "Is it not enough?"

Her eyes turned to it and flashed in

disdain. "The Sodom and Gomorrah!" She spoke scornfully. "Not so much as a copy!"

"It is signed."

She glanced at it again. There was shrewd intolerance in the old eyes. "Do you think I cannot tell?" she said grimly. "I know the work of Albrecht Dürer, length and breadth, line for line. You say he painted that!" She pointed a swift finger at the picture across the room. "Have ye looked at Lot's legs?" Her laugh cackled softly.

The young man smiled under his mustaches.

The baroness had turned again to the picture over the fireplace. "But *that*—" she murmured softly. "It is signed in every line—in the eyes, in the painting of the hair, in the sweep from brow to chin. It will yet be found," she said under her breath. "It shall be found."

He looked at her, smiling. Then he raised his eyes politely to the picture. A slow look formed behind the smile. He half started, gazing intently at the deep, painted canvas. His glance strayed for a second to the green window, and back again to the picture.

The old baroness roused herself with a sigh. She turned toward him. "Your dissertation has brought you honor, they tell me," she said, looking at him critically.

He acknowledged the remark with a bow. "It is nothing," he replied indifferently. "Only a step toward molecules and atoms."

The baroness smiled grimly. "I don't understand chemical jargon." Her tone was dry. "I understand you are going to be famous."

The young man bowed again absently. He glanced casually at the pic-

ture above the fireplace. "What would you give to know"—he nodded toward it—"that it is a genuine Dürer?"

The shrewd eyes darted at him.

The clean-cut face was compact and expressionless.

"Give! I would give"—her eye swept the apartment with its wealth of canvas and gilt and tapestry—"I would give all, everything in the room"—she raised a knotted hand toward the picture—"to know that Albrecht Dürer's monogram belongs there." The pointing finger trembled a little.

He looked at it reflectively. Then his glance travelled about the great room. "Everything in this room," he said slowly. "That means—" He paused, glancing toward the window.

The young girl had left her seat. The papers had dropped to the floor. She was

leaning from the casement to pick a white rose that swayed and nodded, out of reach.

He waited a breath. Her fingers closed on it and she sank back in her chair, smiling, the rose against her cheek.

The eyes watching her glowed softly. "Everything in this room—" He spoke very low. "The one with the rose?"

The old face turned to him with a look. The heavy jaw dropped and forgot to close. The keen eyes scanned his face. The jaws came together with a snap. She nodded to him shrewdly.

The young man rose to his feet. The cynical smile had left his face. It was intent and earnest. He looked up for a moment to the picture, and then down at the wrinkled, eager face.

"To-morrow, at this time, you shall know," he said gravely.

The old eyes followed him, half in doubt, half in hope. They pierced the heavy door as it swung shut behind him.

The stiff, dapper figure had crossed the hall. The outer door clanged.

Against the green window, within, the soft curls and gentle, questioning eyes of the Fräulein Marie waited. As the door clanged, a rose was laid lightly to her lips and dropped softly into the greenness below.

## IV

AT a quarter to ten the next morning a closed carriage drew up before the heavy gate. A dapper figure pushed open the door and leaped out. It entered the big gateway, crossed a green garden and was ushered into the presence of the Baroness von Herkomer.

She stood beneath the picture, her eyebrows bent, her lips drawn, and her hands resting on the stout cane.

"Will you come with me?" he asked deferentially.

"Where to?"

He hesitated. "You will see. I cannot tell you—now. But I need you—with the picture." He motioned toward it.

She eyed him grimly for a second. Then she touched a bell.

The wooden butler appeared. "Send Wilhelm," she commanded.

Half an hour later the Herr Doctor Holtzenschuer was handing a bundled figure into the closed carriage that stood before the gate. A huge, oblong package rested against a lamp-post beside him, and near it stood the Fräulein Marie, rosy and shy. The young man turned to her with a swift gesture.

"Come," he said.

He placed her beside her grandmother, and watched carefully while the heavy parcel was lifted to the top of the carriage. With an injunction to the driver for its safety, he turned to spring into the carriage.

The voice of the baroness, from muffled folds, arrested him.

"You will ride outside with the picture," it said. "I do not trust it to a driver."

With a bow he slammed the carriage

door and mounted the box. In another minute the Herr Professor Doctor Holtzenschuer was driving rapidly through the streets of Munich, on the outside of a common hack, a clumsy parcel balanced awkwardly on his stiff shoulders.

From the windows below, on either side, a face looked out upon the flying streets—a fairy with gentle eyes and a crone with toothless smile.

"The Pinakothek!" grumbled the old woman. "Does he think any one at the Pinakothek knows more of Albrecht Dürer than Henriette von Herkomer?" She sniffed a little and drew her folds about her.

Past the Old Pinakothek rolled the flying carriage—on past the New Pinakothek. An old face peered out upon the marble walls, wistful and suspicious. A mass of buildings loomed in view.

"The university," she muttered under her breath. "Some upstart Herr Professor—to tell *me* of Albrecht Dürer! Fool—fool!" She croaked softly in her throat.

"The Herr Doctor is a learned man, grandmamma—and a gentleman!" said a soft voice beside her.

"A gentleman can be a fool!" returned the old woman tartly. "What building is this?"

The carriage had stopped before a low, square doorway.

"It is the chemistry laboratory, grandmamma," said the girl timidly.

The old woman leaned forward, gray with rage, pulling at the closed door. "Chemistry lab—" Her breath came in pants. "He will—destroy—burn—melt it!" Four men lifted down the huge parcel from the carriage and turned

toward the stone door. "Stop!" she gestured wildly to them.

The door flew open. The young scientist stood before her, bowing and smiling. She shook a knotted finger at him. "Stop those men!" she cried sternly.

At a gesture the men waited. She descended from the carriage, shaking and suspicious, her cane tapping the pavement before her. The Fräulein Marie leaped lightly down after her. Her hand had rested for a moment on the young man's sleeve. A white rose trembled in the fingers. His face glowed.

"Is your Highness ready?" he asked. He had moved to the old woman's side.

She was standing, one hand on the wrapped parcel, the other on her stout cane, peering suspiciously ahead.

"Is your Highness ready?" he repeated.

"Go on," she said briefly.

Four men were in the hall when they entered—the director of the Old Pinakothek, the artist Adrian Kauffmann, the president of the university, and a young man with a scared, helpful face, who proved to be a laboratory assistant.

"They are your witnesses," murmured the young man in her ear.

She greeted them stiffly, her eyes on the precious parcel. Swiftly the wrappings were undone, and the picture lifted to a huge easel across the room. The light fell full upon it.

The witnesses moved forward in a body, silent. The old face watching them relaxed. She smiled grimly.

"Is it a Dürer?" she demanded. She was standing behind them.

They started, looking at her doubtfully. The artist shrugged his shoulders.